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ESSAYS

ON

FICTION.

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BY

NASSAU W. SENIOR.

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NOTE.

THIS BOOK was nearly through the press when MR. SENIOR was seized with illness so serious as to prevent his adding the final touches. The whole, however, had been carefully prepared; perhaps too carefully, for it would have been interesting to compare the early, somewhat exuberant style in which the reviews of Scott were written, with the terse condensed sentences of the later articles.

But the few lines with which he would have re-introduced these papers to the public are a more important loss. He would have felt that to send forth the notice on the greatest novelist of our own day, William Makepeace Thackeray, without one word of explanation or of regret, into a world still smarting from his loss, would have been treason to the friendship which united both author and reviewer. To ears in which the sound of the last strokes of the funeral knell still lingers, this criticism will probably seem severe; but when the article first appeared, Mr. Thackeray, with the generous

cordiality for which he was so remarkable, expressed his entire approval. No doubt he thought that the impartial judgment and diligent study which it evinced were a more precious tribute to his temper and genius than the indiscriminate flattery too often lavished upon authors by their friends.

The article on 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' will awaken a responsive echo in many a heart.

Mr. Senior's recovery has made so much progress that it is hard to refrain from eliciting the valuable remarks which he would perhaps be able, even now, to add to this little volume. I trust that when he reads this page he will forgive its inadequate expression of his meaning. My motive I am sure would be his: that nothing may prevent the appearance of this book on the day for which it has been announced.

M. C. M. S.

March 15, 1864.

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ESSAYS

ON

FICTION.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Rob Roy — Heart of Midlothian — Bride of Lammermoor — Montrose — Ivanhoe — Monastery — Abbot — Kenilworth — The Pirate — The Fortunes of Nigel — Peveril of the Peak — Quentin Durward — St. Ronan's Well — Red Gauntlet — Tales of the Crusaders — Woodstock — Chronicles of the Canongate: First Series — Chronicles of the Canongate: Second Series.*

IT had become a trite remark, long before there was the reason for it which now exists, that the Waverley novels are, even from their mere popularity, the most striking literary phenomena of the age. And that popularity, unequalled as it is in its extent, is perhaps more extraordinary in its permanence. It has resisted the tendency of the public, and perhaps of ourselves, much as we struggle against it, to think every subsequent work of the same author inferior to its predecessors, if it be not manifestly superior. It has resisted the satiety which

* Extracted from the "Quarterly Review," Nos. l. li. lii. liii. liv., and the 'London Review,' No. 1.

might have been predicted as the necessary consequence of the frequent repetition of similar characters and situations. Above all, it has withstood *pessimum genus inimicorum laudantes.** And, in spite of acute enemies, and clumsy friends, and bungling imitators, each successive novel succeeds in obtaining a fortnight of attention as deep and as exclusive as was bestowed upon 'Waverley' and 'Guy Mannering.' We have heard this popularity accounted for in many various ways. It has been attributed to the picturesque reality of the author's descriptions, to the truth and individuality of his characters, to the depth of his pathos and the gaiety of his humour, to the purity and candour of his morality, and to the clear, flexible and lively, yet unaffected style, which is so delightful a vehicle of his more substantial merits.

But we do not think that these qualities, even taken together, sufficiently account for such an effect as has been produced. In almost all of them, he has had equals—in some, perhaps, superiors—and though we know of no novelist of any age or any nation who has united all these excellences in so high a degree, their deficiencies have been balanced by strength, in what are our author's weakest points, interest and probability in the fable, and clearness of narration.

We are inclined to suggest as the additional cause of his success, the manner in which his works unite the most

* Among these enemies, 'who bless their friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning,' we must not be supposed to include Mr. Adolphus, whose 'Letters to Mr. Heber' are a work of extraordinary merit, and of extraordinary promise.

irreconcilable forms, and the most opposite materials. He exhibits, sometimes in succession and sometimes intermingled, tragedy and the romance, comedy and the novel.

Great events, exalted personages, and awful superstitions have in general been the exclusive province of the two former. But the dignity which has been supposed to belong to those styles of writing has, in general, excluded the representations of the every-day occurrences and familiar emotions which, though parts of great events, and incident to great people, are not characteristic of either. And as human nature is principally conversant in such occurrences and emotions, it has in general been inadequately or falsely represented in tragedy and romance; inadequately by good writers, and falsely by bad—the former omitting whatever could not be made splendid and majestic, the latter exaggerating what they found really great, attempting to give importance to what is base and trivial, and sacrificing reason and probability to render freebooters dignified, and make familiar friends converse in heroics. Homer and Euripides are the only exceptions among the ancients; and no modern tragedian, except Shakspeare, has ventured to make a king's son 'remember that poor creature, small beer.'

Human nature, therefore, fell into the hands of comedians and novelists; but they seem either to have thought that there was something in the feelings and sufferings of ordinary mortality inconsistent with those who are made of the porcelain clay of the earth; or not to have formed

sufficiently general conceptions, to venture beyond the limits of their own experience. Their characters, therefore, are copied from the originals with whom the writer, and therefore the reader, is familiar; they are placed in situations which derive no interest from their novelty; and the usual catastrophe is an event which every reader has experienced or expected.

We may compare tragedy to a martyrdom by one of the old masters; which, whatever be its merit, represents persons, emotions, and events so remote from the experience of the spectator, that he feels the grounds of his approbation and blame to be in a great measure conjectural. The romance, such as we generally have seen it, resembles a gothic window-piece, where monarchs and bishops exhibit the symbols of their dignity, and saints hold out their palm branches, and grotesque monsters in blue and gold pursue one another through the intricacies of a never-ending scroll, splendid in colouring, but childish in composition, and imitating nothing in nature but a mass of drapery and jewels thrown over the commonest outlines of the human figure. The works of the comedian and novelist, in their least interesting forms, are Dutch paintings and caricatures: in their best, they are like Wilkie's earlier pictures, accurate imitations of pleasing, but familiar objects—admirable as works of art, but addressed rather to the judgment than to the imagination.

Our author's principal agents are the mighty of the earth, often mixed, in his earlier works, with beings of

more than earthly attributes. He paints the passions which arm sect against sect, party against party, and nation against nation. He relates, either episodically or as the main object of his narrative, the success or failure of attempts which permanently affect the happiness of states; conspiracies and rebellions, civil war and religious persecution, the overthrow of dynasties and changes of belief.

> There I saw how the secret felon wrought,
> And treason, lab'ring in the traitor's thought;
> On the other side there stood destruction bare,
> Unpunished rapine, and a waste of war,
> Contest, with sharpened knives, in cloysters drawn,
> And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.

So far he has nothing in common with the novelist or the comedian. But he writes for the times when the veil of high life is rent or torn away—when all men are disposed to scrutinize, and competent to judge—when they look through and through kings and statesmen, and see that they are and act as mere men. He has, therefore, treated those lofty subjects with a minuteness of detail, and an unsparing imitation of human nature, in its foibles as well as in its energies, which few writers, excepting the three whom we have mentioned, have had the boldness and the philosophy to employ in the representation of exalted characters and national events. 'His story requires warriors and kings, but he thinks only on men;' and well aware that independence and flattery must heighten every peculiarity, he has drawn in a royal personage the most laughable picture that perhaps ever

was exhibited of human folly and inconsistency. By his intermixture of public and private events, he has shown how they act and re-act on one another; how results which appear, to him who views them from the distance of history, to depend on causes of slow and irresistible operation, are produced, or prevented, or modified by the passions, the prejudices, the interests, and often the caprice of individuals; and on the other hand, how essential national tranquillity is to individual happiness—what family discord and treachery, what cruelty, what meanness, what insolence, what rapacity, what insecurity, in short, what vice and misery of every kind must be witnessed and felt by those who have drawn the unhappy lot of existence in times of civil war and revolution.

We have no doubt that his constant introduction of legal proceedings (a subject as carefully avoided by his predecessors) materially assists the plausibility of his narratives. In peaceful times, the law is the lever which sets in motion a great part of our actions, and regulates and controls them all. And if, in times of civil disturbance, its regular and beneficial operation be interrupted (and indeed such an interruption is the criterion and the great mischief of civil disturbance), yet the forms of law are never in more constant use. Men who would not rob or murder, will sequestrate and condemn. The advantage, the gratification of avarice or hatred, is enjoyed by all—the responsibility is divided; since those who framed the iniquitous law have not to execute it, and those who give effect to it did not create it. The recurrence, therefore,

in our author's works, of this mainspring of human affairs, has a double effect. If the story were true, we should expect to meet with it; supposing it fictitious, we should expect it to be absent.

An example will illustrate much of what we have attempted to explain. We will take one from Waverley. The principal scenes are laid in a royal palace, in a field of battle, where a kingdom is the stake, and at the head-quarters of a victorious army. The actors are, an exiled prince, reclaiming the sceptre of his ancestors, and the armed nobility and gentry of his kingdom. So far we are in the lofty regions of romance. And in any other hands than those of our author the language and conduct of these great people would have been as dignified as their situations. We should have heard nothing of the hero in his new costume 'majoring afore the muckle pier-glass' —of his arrest by the host of the candlestick—of his examination by the well-powdered Major Melville — or his fears of being informed against by Mrs. Nosebag. The baron would not have claimed to draw off the princely caligæ. Fergus would not have been influenced in bringing his sister to the camp by the credit to be obtained through her beauty and accomplishments. We should not have been told of the staff appointment refused by Waverley, or of the motives which caused him first to march with the M'Ivors, and afterwards with the baron. In short, we should have had a uniform and imposing representation of a splendid scene, calculated to leave false recollections with the uninstructed, and none at all with the judicious

reader. But when we study the history of the rebellion in Waverley, we feel convinced that though the details presented to us never existed, yet they must resemble what really happened; and that while the leading persons and events are as remote from those of ordinary life as the inventions of Scuderi, the picture of human nature is as faithful as could have been given by Fielding or Le Sage.

To this peculiarity must be added the combination of history and fiction, mirth and pathos, the narrative and dramatic forms—a combination which, though sometimes objectionable, is in general so admirably managed, as to afford his appropriate food to the reader who is cursed with an exclusive taste, and to open to those whose appetite is universal, all the sources of literary excitement, mutually supplying the deficiëncies and heightening the powers of each other.

Three years* have now elapsed since we reviewed the first series of the Tales of my Landlord—and in that interval a line of three and twenty new volumes has covered our table. A sight which, as we sit with it before us, might alarm even German diligence. It is in some measure a compensation, that we consequently address readers who are masters of their subject, and may engage in criticism without previous exposition. Our present situation has all the advantages over our ordinary one, which the comedian in Athenæus attributes to tragedy over his own art.

——In every sense
This tragedy's a blessed kind of writing:

* Published 1821.

For first, before your Prologue opes his mouth,
The audience know the tale, and catch your drift
From a mere hint. Mention but Œdipus—
They knew the rest by rote, 'his sire was Laius;
His mother, Queen Jocasta; such and such
His sons and daughters; such his former deeds,
And such (anon) his fate.' Or name Alcmæon,
'The madman, is it not, that slew his mother?'
Echoes each urchin—
——Now we poor Comedians
Get no such lucky lifts—our toiling brains
Must coin new names, new circumstances past,
New present incidents, new introductions,
And new catastrophes; and if we blunder
In this same dull explanatory task,
We get hissed off; while your high tragic dons
May boggle by prerogative forsooth.

First, in order of time, comes ROB ROY. We never rejoiced more in the circumstances which exempt us from endeavouring to relate our author's plots: for though we have this instant closed the last volume, and though one of the objects of our re-perusal was to make out the story, we are by no means sure that we have succeeded. Nothing but the novel's being in the first person, so that the author appears bound only to relate the events which his hero saw and heard, without detailing the steps by which they are brought about, could have enabled him to make it hang together, even with the small portion of plausibility which it now possesses. He must have been puzzled, if he had been forced, in his own person, to account for the influence which constrained Rashleigh to produce Campbell, in order to extricate his hero at Justice Inglewood's, or for

the success of that extraordinary proceeding. It is equally difficult to account for the interposition of Rashleigh's political friends, to oblige him to give up the assets, which he had taken in order to forward (though in an unintelligible way) their views as well as his own — and for the effect of that interference, at a time when he had determined to quit their party. Indeed, the whole business of the assets — what they were — the objects for which they were taken — the manner in which they are recovered, is one mass of confusion and improbability. The author himself, as he goes on, finds himself so thoroughly involved in the meshes of his plot, that seeing no legitimate extrication, he clears himself at last by the most absolute, we had almost said the most tyrannical, exercise of the empire which authors must be acknowledged to have over their personages and events, which we recollect, even in the annals of that despotic class of sovereigns. It is a coup d'état which we might have expected from an Asiatic writer. He had resolved that his hero should, after the custom of heroes, enjoy the family estate and marry the heroine. But the estate is in the hands of an uncle, with six healthy sons; the heroine is pledged either to marry one of them or to take the veil. Opposuit Natura alpesque nivemque. First comes the estate. An ordinary novelist would have felt that his hero could not have it; or, if he had set his heart upon giving it him, would have made out some story of an old entail, or a forged will, or have tried some other trite expedient by which, with a resemblance to the common course of events, he

might obtain it. It would not have been easy to do it well, and we cannot find any plan by which it could have been done tolerably. One plan only, we can confidently say, he would *not* have adopted. He would not have killed all the six sons by different violent deaths, and the father of a broken heart for their loss, within the space of six months. If the sudden death of one person be a most inartificial mode of bringing about a catastrophe, what shall we say of this literary execution of a whole family?

But the marriage was as difficult a business as the succession. Diana was opposed to the hero in religion and in principles; she was under the absolute influence of her father, and he is determined, at their last appearance, with her apparent acquiescence, to 'dedicate her to God.' It appears, from a hint in p. 345, that our author had thoughts of recurring to his old method, and killing Sir Frederick Vernon before his daughter should be irrevocably vowed to the cloister, and then making her change her mind and marry. Whether the clumsiness of these expedients disgusted him when he came to put them into execution, or whether, when in sight of land, he was too anxious to scramble ashore to wait for the ordinary means, we are not informed—but, in fact, he has left the difficulty as he found it. He tells us indeed that Diana Vernon became Mrs. Francis Osbaldistone — and he tells Will Tresham that *he* knows how it took place, but he does *not* tell the reader. We recollect, when we were beginners in chess, our indignation at the abrupt ends of some of Philidor's games, in which, the pieces and pawns ap-

pearing to our ignorant eyes pretty well balanced, we were told, 'The white King wins in seven moves.' When we played out the game, sometimes the white king won in four moves, sometimes in twenty, sometimes he was checkmated in six moves, and sometimes he gave a stale mate in five. But what were the seven moves thus obscurely indicated, we could not find out. How Mr. Osbaldistone sped in his wooing is still more mysterious.

The characters are, as usual, admirable. The best, perhaps, of the men is the Baillie. Nothing can promise less originality or interest than the portrait of a conceited, petulant, purse-proud tradesman; full of his own and his father's local dignity and importance, and of mercantile and presbyterian formalities, and totally without tact or discretion, who does nothing in the story but give bail, take a journey, and marry his maid. But the courage, the generosity, and the frank naïveté and warm-heartedness, which are united to these unpromising ingredients, and above all, perhaps, the 'Hieland blude of him that warms at thae daft tales o' venturesome deeds and escapes — tho' they are all sinfu' vanities,' and makes him affirm before the council that Rob Roy 'set apart what he had dune again the law o' the country, and the hership o' the Lennox' (i. e. the laying waste and plundering a whole country) 'and the misfortune o' some folk losing life by him, was an honester man than stude on any o' their hanks,' make him both original and interesting. Rashleigh is that difficult subject, a well-drawn villain. The reader feels that his hypocrisy might have deceived—that of

the common fictitious rascal would only disgust. Rob Roy himself well answers our preconceptions of his character. The man who, without rank or fortune, could for thirty or forty years set all law at defiance, who, though peculiarly obnoxious to the government, not merely as breaking its laws and plundering its subjects, but as a rebel and a traitor, and at deadly feud with the great men on whose property he lived, could resist all their power, and elude all their stratagems, without being ever overwhelmed by superior force, or betrayed by the treachery of his own companions — taken, as many of them must have been, from among the least trustworthy of men — must have been a man of extraordinary talents and, mixed with his great vices, of extraordinary virtues. He must have had the first in order to play his own part well, the second in order to retain in devoted fidelity his associates.

And he must have been a man of extraordinary courage. Some of our readers may perhaps be surprised at hearing that the last has been doubted; and, certainly, on the occasions which are the most usual tests of courage, he behaved ill. He fought two duels, and in both of them yielded almost immediately, in no very honourable manner. And, at Sheriff Muir, on the only occasion in which, with the temporary command of the clan, he had an opportunity of showing at once his spirit and his devotion,

> He never advanced
> From the place he was stanced
> Till nae mair was to do there at a', man.

But the fact is, that no two things can be more different than the courage of an outlaw and that of a soldier. The

first is founded on familiarity with danger—it is the virtue of rude times, and can be obtained only by repeated exposure to peril. The second is founded on the point of honour—it can exist only in a most artificial state of society, and is so far from requiring repeated exposure, that it is often most perfectly exhibited by men who were never in danger before in their lives.

The first arises from the contempt which is the proverbial result of familiarity. A man who has been often in danger has learnt to distinguish its real from its apparent symptoms—to fear the lightning, not the thunder. He has learnt to balance the hazards of different modes of escape—to wait the opportunity for putting in practice that which appears most promising, and to snatch that opportunity when, on the whole, it appears probable that a better will not offer. All this supposes great calmness and presence of mind—but is compatible with a thorough detestation of all unnecessary risk. It not only is compatible with such a detestation, but its natural tendency, if uncounteracted by other causes, must be to produce it. The constant association, in such a man's mind, with danger has been, that it is a thing to be as much as possible avoided. His constant meditation has been, how shall I attain my object with the least hazard, and, having attained it, how shall I best provide for my safety? Such habits fit him admirably for avoiding danger—and for encountering it when it cannot be avoided; but very ill for thrusting himself into it when it can—or for continuing in it when any mode of escape is open. No man can show more calmness in danger, than a North American Indian, or try

more frightful modes of escape, if they are the best that offer —or fight more desperately if he is absolutely forced to fight. But he will not fight *unless* he is forced. He will rather endure any fatigue, cold, sleeplessness, and famine, to surprise his deadliest enemy, than meet him on fair, or on nearly fair, terms.

Military courage is founded on the glory attached to the endurance of danger, and to the infamy attached to undue fear. And, as no natural bounds can be assigned to qualities which are themselves unnatural, the necessary endurance was first raised to insensibility, and at last to delight, in danger. In that most artificial period which followed both the English and the French civil wars, when the minds of men, deprived of the violent sources of excitement to which they had been accustomed, ran into every sort of affectation and absurdity, a gentleman seems to have been bound to hold any opportunity of encountering danger a source of unalloyed enjoyment. Any ulterior purpose, however frivolous, was not to be required. A man who was so fortunate as to receive, or to have a fair opportunity of giving, a challenge, had the patronage of inviting three or four friends to partake in the amusement; and while the principals, who might be supposed to have some object in it, were fighting, the seconds, instead of minding their duty as umpires, fought too, to show how much they enjoyed a chance of being wounded or killed. The story is well known of the man who offered to Lord Stair such an opportunity, provided he would exercise this patronage in his favour; and who refused to interfere further when

he found he could derive no advantage from the transaction, as his lordship's list was full for his next three affairs. The story is probably coloured, but it shows what were the feelings, at least the cant, of the times in which it could be circulated. A man so trained would have shone on those occasions on which we have described Rob Roy as failing—but it may be questioned whether he would have heard, with the same presence of mind, the Baillie's step on the Tolbooth's stairs; and whether, if strapped, like him, to Evan Bigg, he would have had sufficient boldness to plan his escape, sufficient composure to execute it, or sufficient patience to delay it to the most favourable instant.

We have heard the character of Die Vernon called unnatural. She ought, perhaps, to be somewhat older, twenty-two would have been better than eighteen; but grant the author what he has always a right to claim for his heroine, if he is bold enough to think he can support them, great talents and excellence of disposition, and add, what certainly is possible, an education perfectly unfemale, under the superintendence of two men of talent and learning, and add the pride of high birth, and the enthusiasm of an adherent to a persecuted religion and an exiled king—exclude her from the ordinary wishes and schemes of young girls by predestining her to a hateful husband or a cloister, and give her, instead of their ordinary amusements and employments, political intrigues, Greek and Latin, and field-sports, and you have the rough outlines of the portrait, to which our author has given such relief and colouring.

But we must hasten to the 'HEART OF MID LOTHIAN,' —with the exception perhaps of 'Waverley,' the most perfect of the whole set. And we are not sure that even 'Waverley' may not owe the superiority in our eyes, which, on reconsideration, we still feel that it possesses, to the circumstances under which we first read it. We shall never forget the disappointment and listlessness with which, in the middle of a watering-place long vacation, we tumbled a new, untalked-of, anonymous novel out of the box which came to us, from our faithless librarian, filled with substitutes for everything that we had ordered. Anywhere else we might have returned it uncut; but a watering-place makes a man acquainted with strange companions for his reading as well as for his talking hours. So we opened it, at hazard, in the second volume, and instantly found ourselves, with as much surprise as Waverley himself, and with about the same effect, in the centre of the Chevalier's court. Little did we suspect, while we wondered who this literary giant might be, that seven years after, we should be reviewing so many more of his volumes in one article, and that the mystery would be, except by internal evidence, as dark as ever.

But, abstracting from 'Waverley' the advantage of its primogeniture, the two novels, different as they appear, have many points in common. They are unequalled in the happiness of their subjects. The story of Prince Charles is a piece of the wildest romance in the midst of the dullest flats of history, as if the cave of Staffa could rise in the middle of the Zuyder Zee. The 'Heart of

Mid Lothian' is as fortunately chosen. The escape of Robertson, the murder of Porteous, and the pardon of Effie, though the principal facts of the last are true, and even the minutest details of the two former, are as marvellous in their way as the enterprise of Prince Charles; and the characters in both novels derive the same advantage from our imperfect knowledge of the class from which they are taken. All our author's readers must have observed how much better he paints beggars, gipsies, smugglers, and peasants, the favourites of kings and queens, and kings and queens themselves, the very lowest and the very highest ranks of society, than that rank to which he must himself belong. How superior is Effie Deans to Lady Staunton, and Daddie Ratton to Sir George? How much bolder, and how much more accurate, appears to us the pencil that struck out Dandie Dinmont, than that which drew, though with far more elaboration, Mr. Pleydell? How much more do his Mary of Scotland and Elizabeth of England appear to resemble queens, than his Julia Mannering does, a young lady? How comes he to copy more correctly what he knows imperfectly, than what he knows well?

Our first answer is, We doubt the fact. We suspect that his gentlemen and ladies are, in truth, more faithful portraits than his princes, his beggars, or his rustics; but that the familiarity of his readers with the originals makes their examination of his faithfulness too severe. They are more struck by the deficiencies than by the merits; by what varies from their own standard, than by what

coincides with it. No jockey was ever satisfied with the horses even of Phidias. But when the author paints a peasant, a cowfeeder, or a queen, he takes from a class with which the reader is so little acquainted, that, if the figure be but spirited and consistent, and contain nothing obviously incompatible with its supposed situation, we are willing, indeed we are forced, to take its resemblance upon trust. And perhaps the author's consciousness of the reliance of his reader is even more valuable to him than that reliance itself. It leaves him at liberty to dress his characters, not in the most appropriate, but in the most picturesque, habiliments. If he draws from his own sphere of life, it is from a finished model, where every detail is prescribed to him. If from any other, it is from a sketch of which only one or two leading features are marked, and his imagination may supply, as he likes best, the remainder. He has the same advantage which Dryden translating Chaucer had over Dryden translating Virgil. He is saved too from the danger of losing *general* resemblance in too close a copy of the individuals with whom he is intimate; and from that of introducing something of effort, something of overcolouring and caricature, into his figures, in his endeavours to render striking the representations of a well-known class. A painter may be tempted to put horses and cows into some studied attitude, or to group them too artificially, who would not think of anything more than an unaffected resemblance of an hippopotamus.

Our general admiration of the story of the 'Heart of

Mid Lothian' does not, of course, extend to the management of all the details. The beginning, or rather the beginnings, for there are half a dozen of them, are singularly careless. The author, in his premature anxiety to get in medias res, introduces us at the point where the different interests converge; and then, instead of floating down the united stream of events, we are forced separately to ascend each of its tributary branches, like Humboldt examining the bifurcations of the Oroonoko, until we forget, in exploring their sources, the manner in which they bear on one another. We regret, too, that he should have violated the simplicity of his narrative by that novel-like incident, the testimonial from Butler's grandfather, through which, in some degree, Jeannie obtains the assistance of Argyle. Its introduction is, if we may be allowed to revert to a distinction which we endeavoured to establish in a former article, both improbable and unnatural. Improbable, because, that Jeannie should, the instant she wanted a great protector, have found her obscure lover possessed of the strongest claims on the man best fitted for the purpose, was, to a degree almost beyond the powers of numeration, against the chances of real life. Unnatural, because it was absolutely impossible that a family, holding a document which gave them unlimited access to the patronage of the most powerful nobleman in Scotland, should have suffered it to remain unemployed, like Aladdin's rusty lamp, while they struggled through three generations in poverty and disappointment. If our author thinks even *this* more natural, than that

Argyle should have been induced, by Jeannie's representations, to examine into her sister's case, by his doubts as to her guilt to interfere in her favour, and by his sympathy with Jeannie's heroism to bestow his benefits on her and her family, we must say that he thinks much worse than we do of the characters which he has drawn.

We are not sure, too, that it might not have been politic in the author to suppress almost all his fourth volume. We are very glad that he did not, for it is very amusing. Knockdunder is excellent; and so is the transformation of Gentle Geordie and Effie into Sir George and Lady Staunton, particularly the latter; and we revisited with pleasure, in Sir George's company, the Tolbooth door and Saddletree's shop. A new and most entertaining light is likewise thrown upon the character of David Deans; his feelings on Dumbiedike's marriage, his reconciliation of his speculative principles with existing circumstances, and his discussion with Butler as to his acceptance of the Duke's preferment, are delightful. But all this has the effect of a farce after a tragedy. Where the ludicrous is interwoven with the pathetic or the terrible, it heightens the effect, both by contrast and by the appearance which it gives of authenticity. Saddletree's absurdities have certainly a good effect in the trial scene; but a whole train of light amusing narrative, in which the very persons, whose previous history has harrowed the reader's mind with pity and terror, or swelled it with admiration, have nothing to do but to show foibles and enjoy prosperity, lowers sadly their poetical dignity, little perhaps as they themselves would have been aware of it.

Among the exquisite scenes, on which the opinion that we have just ventured to express is founded, perhaps the most perfect is the meeting of the sisters before the trial. We will own, that on our first perusal we trembled for the author when we found that he really meant to exhibit it. We felt that such a meeting must create emotions almost beyond the power of words; and yet that a single expression exaggerated, or constrained, or artificial, would poison the whole. The trial has not perhaps the same merit from its difficulty, but is as striking in its execution. Effie is a perfect specimen of the fit subject for fictitious misfortune. Not so good as to make her calamities absolutely revolting; not so bad as to make them appear appropriate punishments. Her crime is precisely the *ἁμαρτία μεγάλη* of Aristotle. Had it been deeper, her sufferings would, of course, have excited less pity; had it been none at all, they would have raised, instead of pity, horror and indignation. As it is, our exquisite pity for *her*, and our pity, mingled with admiration, for her father, produce an intensity of interest which extends itself, not only to the important incidents, but to the minute formalities of the trial, which is even heightened, as we observed before, by the foolery of Saddletree, and the bad taste of her advocate, and is not destroyed even by our constant anticipation of the event. We wait with almost as much anxiety during Jeannie's silence after Fairbrother's question, 'And what was the answer she made?' and while the yet unpublished verdict is sealed and recorded, as if we did not well know what must, in each case, be the result.

We cannot bestow the same unqualified praise on another celebrated scene, Jeannie's interview with Queen Caroline. Jeannie's pleading appears to us much too rhetorical for the person and for the occasion; and the queen's answer, supposing her to have been overpowered by Jeannie's entreaties, 'This is eloquence,' is still worse. Had it *been* eloquence, it must necessarily have been unperceived by the queen. If there be any art of which *celare artem* is the basis, it is this. The instant it peeps out, it defeats its own object, by diverting our attention from the subject to the speaker, and that with a suspicion of his sophistry equal to our admiration of his ingenuity. A man who, in answer to an earnest address to the feelings of his hearer, is told, 'you have spoken eloquently,' feels that he has failed. Effie, when she entreats Sharpitlaw to allow her to see her sister, *is* eloquent, and his answer accordingly betrays perfect unconsciousness that she has been so. 'You shall see your sister,' he began, 'if you'll tell me;' then interrupting himself, he added in a more hurried tone, 'no, you shall see your sister whether you tell me or no.'

The duke himself is, perhaps, a little too fine spoken in his opening conversation with the queen, but his character is in general happily finished. The vanity, which covered his great qualities with a varnish, that has perhaps contributed to the permanence of his reputation, is very gracefully insinuated. Douce Davie Deans is magnanimous in his affliction, and amusing in his prosperity. We have but one fault to find with him, the laugh which is constantly raised by his religious peculiarities. It may be

said, that the weight of his religion, like that of armour of proof, if it sometimes repels the impulses of nature when they are right, always secures him from them when they are wrong; that, if it loads him with unnecessary scruples, it arms him with heroic self-devotion and conconstancy; and if it sometimes makes him absurd, leaves him often venerable, and always respectable in his absurdity. But it is precisely to this union of good and evil consequences that, *as a subject of general representation*, we object. When religion, or what resembles it, is represented as rendering sanguinary and merciless such a fanatic as Burley, every reader can perceive that his belief does not create his bad passions, but only decides their course. Pride, violence, and malignity are essential parts of his character; and if he had been an Atheist instead of a Cameronian, they would have only changed their objects. But the religion of Davie Deans is the basis of his whole character; his faults and follies seem, no less than his virtues, to spring from it. And we can conceive a reader, without much power of discrimination, so strongly associating them together, as to believe the one as necessary a consequence of it as the other; and to congratulate himself that *he* is a man of the world, above all silly scruples. We refer, as an illustration of our remark, to his conversation with Saddletree and Butler on the choice of a counsel for Effie, at the end of the first volume.

To get rid of the little which we have remaining of blame, we must add, that we do not think George Robertson quite worthy of his author. He is melo-dramatic.

Men, whatever may be their remorse, do not profusely apply to themselves the terms villain, murderer, and devil; or calmly affirm themselves predestined to evil here and hereafter. They have always a reserve as to the goodness of their hearts, especially where they are ready, as Robertson is described to be, to sacrifice their lives to save that of another. Saddletree is less annoying than our author's fool generally is, because there is less of him. He is not, like Fair Service, in 'Waverley,' locomotive, so that when we escape from Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, we leave him. His wife is happily contrasted to him. We thoroughly enter into her dislike of her husband's gossips, and her indignation to 'see sae mony o'them set up yonder in their red gowns and black gowns, and a' to take the life o' a bit senseless lassie.' What to say of Madge Wildfire we scarcely know. The outline is bold and the colouring vivid; and it is more like what we suppose madness to be than any other representation of it that we recollect. But whether it is really like, those only can tell who have had the misfortune to see more of the insane than has fallen to our lot. Her introduction, to warn Robertson by her songs that an enemy is at hand, rather too much resembles the incident in the Lady of the Lake, where Fitz James is warned of the ambush by the song of the maniac Blanche. The novel, however, tells the story with more plausibility.

We must not close our remarks without taking a more formal leave of Jeannie. She is a perfect model of sober heroism; of the union of good sense with strong affections,

firm principles, and perfect disinterestedness; and of the calm superiority to misfortune, danger, and difficulty which such a union must create. A hero so characterized generally spoils the interest of a novel, both because the reader knows him to be protected, among all his dangers, by the strong arm of poetical justice, and because his conduct upon every occasion is anticipated. The first of these inconveniences is skilfully obviated, by making another person the object of the dangers on which the interest of the story depends, and using Jeannie only as the means of averting them; the second, by placing her in humble life, and then exposing her to situations in which no good sense could supply the want of experience. As it is, she is a splendid exception to the insipidity of perfect characters, and excites and retains the reader's deepest interest, without possessing the advantage of a single fault.

We are almost inclined to renounce the supremacy of 'Waverley,' and of the 'Heart of Mid Lothian,' when we come to the 'BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.' It is a tragedy of the highest order, and unites excellence of plot to our author's usual merits of character and description. It may be objected, that poor Lucy Ashton's misfortunes are too much the sufferings of innocence to be the fit subjects of tragical sympathy. Her forming the engagement with Ravenswood cannot, as it is described, be considered even as an error. She adheres to it, through every persecution of violence and art, while her reason remains unimpaired;

and her final breach of it is scarcely an act of the will. Perhaps the answer is, that a voluntary breach of engagement is a fault to which so much disapprobation is attached, that some degree of disapprobation—that degree which affords a pretext for the misfortunes of tragedy—is attached to one that is involuntary. No combination of circumstances will perfectly wipe off the stain of a breach of chastity and constancy is the chastity of the affection, and is as necessary to the security of unmarried love, as that of the person is to married love. Both are, therefore, fenced with the same jealousy; and a woman who has been surprised, or seduced, or impelled into a violation of either, though under circumstances that may acquit her in foro conscientiæ, is guilty foro imaginationis. To this arbitrary tribunal the poet resorts; here Miss Ashton will be tried, and though her case is a very hard one, we fear that the verdict will be against her.

Although there is no deficiency of faults in Ravenswood, it is perhaps a blemish, that his faults are so remotely connected with his misfortunes. They set in motion, it is true, the train of causes on which his misery and his death ultimately depend. If he had not been violent and revengeful, the lord keeper would not have feared him; if the lord keeper had not feared him, he would not have endeavoured to soften him by effecting an intimacy with Lucy Ashton. Without that intimacy there would have been no engagement; without the engagement he would not have received the challenge, or have been lost on his way to meet it. But it is not to the remote and ac-

cidental, but to the immediate and appropriate, effects that the reader looks. Now all the immediate effects of Ravenswood's spirit of pride and vengeance are advantages; it frightens a powerful enemy into a friend, gives him the affections of a charming girl, and appears to have great influence in obtaining for him a valuable patron. His misfortunes spring from the enmity of Bucklaw and Lady Ashton; both arising from causes out of his own control, and as likely to have arisen if he had been the meekest of mankind. If this be a fault, it is an unlucky one, as it might have been so easily avoided. His own temper might have been made to afford far more obvious, and more probable, causes of offence, than a gaucherie of Caleb's, or the hereditary dislike of Lady Ashton. As a character he is excellent, admirably drawn, and admirably grouped and contrasted with those around him.

Indeed we recollect no work of our author's in which contrast is more skilfully used. Ravenswood is opposed to Lucy, and Sir William to his lady; and those characters, which at first appear the same, are beautifully distinguished from each other. Sir William and Lucy are flexible and timid; Ravenswood and Lady Ashton are firm and decisive. But the flexibility of Sir William, arising from fear of personal consequences, and fickleness of purpose, differs as much from that of his daughter, which springs from affectionateness of disposition, anxiety not to give pain, and preference of others to herself, as the firmness of Lady Ashton does from that of Ravenswood. Lady Ashton's firmness is nurtured in affluence and power,

strengthened by the subservience of him who fills the station of her superior, and confirmed by the direction of all her purposes to family aggrandisement. Ravenswood's is grounded, in a great measure, on the want of those advantages, the possession of which contributes to that of Lady Ashton; on an habitual feeling that he is defrauded of his just rank in society, and habitual exertions to force those who cross him to acknowledge it. He treats them as inferiors, whom accident and injustice have made his equals, and follows his own impulses without deference for their opinions or their feelings. But, as one impulse succeeds another, his course, though vehement and intrepid, is not always consistent. Lady Ashton's is governed by calculation, and is therefore unvarying.

The engagement between the lovers is beautifully managed, and with the more merit, as it is a scene in which ordinary novelists often fail. They generally seem to select it as an opportunity for fine writing—for long flowery 'declarations in form,' to use their own expression, on the part of the hero, and pretty disclaimers on that of the lady. Now in fact, where such a scene is merely the éclaircissement of a previous mutual affection (and those are the cases of which we are speaking), nothing can be shorter, less impassioned, or less 'in form' than the really important parts of it. The veil between them has become so slight that the least touch tears it down. Short half-hints of attachment on *his* part, and of acquiescence on hers, are enough to explain their mutual feelings, and both parties are anxious, as quickly as

possible, to consider the explanation as made. There may, or may not, be protestations and vehemence in the conversation that follows; we only wish to exclude them from those very few words which, with the reply or silence by which they are followed, actually form the declaration and acceptance; and we will admit, too, a great distinction between the case we have supposed and one of indifference on the man's side. Where an Irish captain woos a city widow, or a boarding-school heiress, he may make all his approaches in form, and when he thinks that he can venture to batter in breach, may open with vows and protestations,

> And all the great artillery of love;

but the conduct of a lover will differ as much from that of a fortune-hunter as his feelings.

The three hags are a bold, we had almost said a not unequal, rivalry of the Weird Sisters. Their professional praise of Ravenswood is whimsically horrible.

'He is a frank man and a free-handed man, the Master,' said Annie Winnie, 'and a comely personage — broad in the shouthers and narrow around the lungies. He wad mak a bonnie corpse; I wad like to have the streaking and winding of him.'

'It is written on his brow, Annie Winnie,' replied the Octogenarian, her companion, 'that hand of woman, or of man either, will never straught him — dead deal will never be laid to his back, make your market of that, for I hae it frae a sure hand.'

'Will it be his lot to die on the battle ground then, Ailsie Gourlay?

'Ask nae mair questions about it — he'll not be graced sae far,' replied the sage.

We wish that Ailsie Gourlay's prediction had been omitted. Like the apparition of Alice Gray, and the prophecy that the last Lord of Ravenswood would stable his steed in the Kelpie's flow, it is a useless improbability. If the latter had been made a mere vague presage of evil, it might have produced equal effect, in deepening the gloom which always overshadows the hero's destiny, without requiring us to mix a belief of actual supernatural agency with the actions and habits of the world as we see it. Or if Ravenswood had been a knight of romance, in habitual intercourse with giants and demons, we might as easily have supposed him to encounter a ghost as a dragon. But in a novel, in which the main instrument is a suit in the Scotch courts carried by appeal into the House of Lords, where the only knight is a lawyer, the principal incident a change in the ministry, and the most affecting scene, the signing of marriage settlements, we cannot believe that an infant's fortune was truly spaed before the sark gaed over its head, that a circumstantial prophecy was accurately fulfilled, or that an old woman made mouths at a young man after she was dead.

But Caleb is a more serious blemish. Of all our author's fools and bores,—and we acknowledge that we dislike the whole race of them, from Monk Barns down to the Euphuist,—he is the most pertinacious, the most intrusive, and, from the nature of his one monotonous note, the least pardonable in his intrusion. His silly

buffoonery is always marring, with gross absurdities and degrading associations, some scene of tenderness or dignity. Our author's eminent success in the difficult and almost untrodden path of tragi-comedy (few writers before him, excepting Shakspeare, having ventured to bring the ludicrous into close contrast with the pathetic) has probably tended, as is often the case, to tempt him into carrying the expedient to an excess. Such contrasts occur in nature; and when represented as they occur in nature, have an interesting and agreeable effect, in a great measure, as we hinted before, from the vivid resemblance to reality thus produced. But they will not admit of being violently and ambitiously introduced. It is the old mistake of the early landscape gardeners, who, in their rage to imitate nature, used to plant dead trees, and build ant hills, close to a house: if it be intolerable to have every circumstance of horror or pathos artificially crowded together, with a studied exclusion of every lighter character and event, still less tolerable is it to have an equally artificial effort after the contrasts of tragi-comedy; to have the broadest and most extravagant caricature continually dragged into studied opposition to the tragic characters and incidents.

We must not quit the 'Bride of Lammermoor' without remarking its deviation from the usual management of a narrative. The fatal nature of the catastrophe is vaguely indicated in the very beginning, at every rest in the story it is more and more pointedly designated; and long before the conclusion we are aware of the place and

means of its accomplishment. We are first told of the malignant fiend under whose influence the tissue of incidents is to be woven. We are told that a dreadful punishment awaits Sir William's selfish calculations on the supposed attachment of Ravenswood and Lucy. Before the lovers have thrice met we are told what were his remarks after the catastrophe of their love; and, however the reader might disregard, in real life, the ominous fatality of the mermaiden's well, the raven that is killed as the lovers quit it, the thunderstorm that marks their interview at Wolf's Craig, or even the prophecies of Ailsie Gourlay and True Thomas, he feels that, in fiction, these are tokens true as holy writ. And yet our interest in the story is strengthened, instead of being destroyed, by our foreknowledge of the conclusion. How is this managed? How is that which generally deadens the reader's interest made, in this instance, its auxiliary?

We believe that the 'Bride of Lammermoor' owes to the nature of its catastrophe its exemption from the usual necessity of reserve—it is the privilege of tragedy. We will assume that every fiction must contain Aristotle's *μετάβασις*, dangers terminating in happiness, or happiness converted into misery. In the former case the impending evils, the probability of which formed the danger, do not actually take place; in the latter, during the apparent safety of the characters, evils are brooding which ultimately destroy it. They are disturbed, in the one case, by causeless fears, and, in the other, lulled in fatal security; and if the reader is aware of this, he in both

cases sympathizes, not with their actual feelings, but with what would be their feelings if they knew their situation. In the first case, if they knew their own safety they would laugh at the apparent danger; and accordingly there is nothing more ludicrous than a man, who thinks himself in danger, when he is not. If the seconds have resolved to charge the pistols merely with powder, we defy their principals, however cool may be their courage, with whatever calmness they may make preparations for a fatal result, to excite any emotions but ridicule. Sancho, clinging in darkness to a ledge of rock with firm ground, where he supposes an unfathomable abyss, six inches below him, has every reason to think himself in the most frightful danger; but we know that he is safe, and we laugh. If we are to sympathise with the courage, we must sympathise with the fear of the hero; to do that, we must, like him, be ignorant of the event. But though a man who is safe when he thinks himself in danger, is only an object of amusement, a man who is in danger when he thinks himself safe, may be an object of the deepest interest;—we feel as he would feel if he knew his situation—we appear even to feel more deeply, when we contrast it with his enjoyment and his gaiety.

> Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
> That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

There is no picture more affecting, than that of high hopes and brilliant expectations, when the reader, alone, hears the wheels of an avenging fortune 'groan heavily along the distant road.' It is a consequence of this dis-

tinction that tragedy is allowed to take her plots from known events, while comedy (using the word somewhat improperly, to designate the class of fictions which end happily) must invent them for herself. How utterly would the judgment-scene in the Merchant of Venice have been ruined if it had been preceded by the conference between Bellario and Portia, and the reader had been warned of the flaw by which Antonio is to be saved! and how carefully has Shakspeare provided, by the interference of Portia, and her reiterated advice and entreaty to the Jew to accept the money (which are in fact unnatural, as she was provided with a better remedy), to convince the spectator that the issue will be fatal! If we could put ourselves in the situation of those for whom Shakspeare wrote; if we could take a draught of Lethe, and then read it as for the first time; or if it could have been concealed from us till our taste was ripe, how much would the scene, beautiful as it is, be improved!

But our interest in Lear or Othello is not diminished by a tenth perusal. It is probable that they would lose by that ignorance of the event by which the Merchant of Venice would be improved. A fiction which ends happily may give as much pleasure on a first perusal, as one which ends unfortunately; but a great part of its power is exhausted by that first perusal. We have been admitted behind the scenes, and though we may admire the skill with which the giant is compounded, we know that his bones are made of wicker, and his muscles of straw. But the evils of tragedy are read, and the knowledge that they

are impending renders affecting even the tranquil scenes by which they are preceded; we feel them to be the calm before the tempest,

> The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below.

The 'LEGEND OF MONTROSE' will not detain us so long as its predecessors. It is, we think, inferior to them all. The plot, if it can be called one, is a fragment of the history of Montrose, without middle or end; to which two or three well-known stories of no great merit, such as that of the chieftain who cheated his English friends of a fairly-won bet, the amputated head which the Macgregors placed at the table once its own, with bread between its jaws, and the assassination of Lord Kilpont by Stuart of Ardvoirlich, are, with new names and dates, inartificially stuck on. A love-story, of slight materials, is interwoven to give it some consistency, and there are in this, as in every other of our author's novels, some splendid purpurei panni. It differs from them all in one respect, that the bore, Dugald Dalgetty, is perhaps the best drawn character. There is a great deal too much of him, as is always the case, but he has more variety in his note than they usually possess. The whole-length portrait of a mere mercenary, whom constant exposure to the violence of his enemies and the selfishness of his friends had covered with a callous integument, equally proof against fear, generosity, and delicacy, would have been tiresome, but for the ludicrous tinge of a pedantry partly scholastic, partly military, and partly national; and the wild figures among whom he is

placed, show off well his regulated vices and his mechanical virtues. His merit is increased by his originality: in ordinary novels high personal courage, and a strict adherence to whatever may have been laid down as the point of honour, are almost entirely confined either to the characters that are intended to be amiable, or to those that, however unamiable, possess a certain lofty and Satanic ferocity—to those whom we intended to love or to fear—to the Æneas or the Mezentius. In Dugald Dalgetty we find cool intrepidity, arising from long familiarity with danger, and habitual adherence to his own point of honour, combined (as is often the case in real life, and seldom, as we have said, in fiction) — with a calculating and sordid disposition — qualities that, instead of love or fear, excite contempt.

The escape from Inverary, with all its improbabilities, is among the splendid patches which we have alluded to. Another is the battle of Inverlochy, with the gradual approach of Montrose's army that precedes, and the contest over the body of the Knight of Ardenvohr, that concludes it. Allan M'Aulay and Mac Eagh would have been fine characters in a poem — we are not sure whether their features are not exaggerated in what purports to be a representation of real events. One cannot believe Mac Eagh's parting injunction to Kenneth to have been delivered — but it is a beautiful piece of Ossianic declamation. His vengeance on Allan M'Aulay is perhaps too artificial and too sentimental for the contriver — particularly as two of his enemies were to gain by it, much more than M'Aulay was

to lose. Menteith is in perfectly good taste, but too unambitious a character to give scope for much praise or or blame: and history has shed a light over the disastrous heroism of Montrose, as disastrous to his country as it was glorious to himself, which debarred our author from individualising him by a nice selection and compensation of qualities. The opportunities, however, which he had, he has used successfully; and has mixed well, with his general panegyric, the alloy of personal motives, which may be supposed to have produced the memorable invasion of Argyleshire.

Next comes the splendid masque, 'IVANHOE.' Of all our author's works, this is formed of the most peculiar materials. Kings, crusaders, knights, and outlaws, Cœur de Lion, and the Templars, and Robin Hood, and Friar Tuck, and the Forest of Sherwood, the names, and the times, and the scenes which are entwined with our earliest and dearest recollections, but which we never hoped again to meet with in serious narrative, become as familiar in our mouths as household terms. Names coupled with such associations would be interesting, however trivial the actions in which they were engaged—and they are used as profusely as they are collected. We have the public and private life of our Saxon and of our Norman ancestor, the domestic meal, the formal banquet, the tournament in both its forms, the storm of a baronial castle, the solemn trial, and the judicial combat. These are among the scenes immediately before us, and, as we

pass through them, views perpetually open on each side of our path, that show the contemporary state of Europe and Asia, with glimpses of Palestine, and Saladin, and the Crusaders in the distance.

We recollect that, on our first perusal, we thought Ivanhoe, though not the best, the most brilliant and most amusing of this whole family of novels. We are not sure that it has stood a second so well. Its principal deficiency is one which besets ordinary novelists, but from which our author is in general eminently free—want of individuality in the principal characters. Ivanhoe, Rowena, Front-de-Bœuf, Locksley, the Templar, and even the grace of the whole story, Rebecca, are each marked by one, or at most two, predominating qualities, without the counter-balancing merits and defects which, by reciprocally modifying each other, distinguish every man, in real life, from his neighbour. Ivanhoe and Rowena are the traditionary hero and heroine of romance. He, brave, and strong, and generous; she, beautiful and amiable; and both of them constant—very well qualified for their employment at the end of the story, to marry and live happily together, but a little insipid during its progress. Front-de-Bœuf is the traditional giant—very big and very fierce—and his active and passive duties are those always assigned to the giant—the first consisting in seizing travellers on the road, and imprisoning them in his castle, to the danger of the honour of the ladies, the life of the knights, and the property of all others; and the second, in being beaten at tournaments and killed by the knight-

errant, to whom the author at length issues his commission of general castle-delivery.

Brian de Bois Guilbert belongs to that hacknied class, the men of fixed resolve and indomitable will—fine ingredients in a character which is marked by other peculiarities, but too uniform and inartificial, and, in fictitious life, too trite, to serve, as they do here, for its basis. To say the truth, we have been lately so bored by the continual recurrence of the Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, who allows no law, but that of arms, that if we had found a novel, which we were trying as an experiment, begin with a description of a person, in whom 'the projection of the veins of the forehead, and the readiness with which the upper lip and its thick black mustachios quivered upon the slightest emotion, plainly indicated that the tempest might be again, and easily awakened'—whose 'keen, piercing, dark eyes told in every glance a history of difficulties subdued, and dangers shared, and seemed to challenge opposition to his wishes, for the pleasure of sweeping it from his road by a determined exertion of courage, and of will'—we fear we should have been apt to push the inquiry no farther.

As Bois Guilbert is almost all in shadow, Rebecca is all in light. Brought up among examples of nothing but extortion and cruelty on one side, and cowardice, meanness, and avarice on the other, in the situation most certain to break the courage, and sour the temper, and narrow the heart, she emerges—perfect. From an education combining every disadvantage, she rises, such as no advantages

could have made her. But in Rebecca the beauty of the execution more than redeems the improbability of the conception. We only regret that her love for Ivanhoe, which is so exquisitely described, is not better accounted for. When we recollect that she knew, when she first saw him, that their difference of race raised between them an impassable barrier; and that, in their first conversation, she discovered where his affections were fixed, it is scarcely possible that love, so totally without hope, could have arisen in a well-disciplined mind, even with the assistance of similarity of character and frequent intercourse. And even these are, in this case, wanting. They are described as opposed in all their feelings, and habits, and prejudices, and associations—and it is in only their second interview that her passion has reached such a height, that, in despair at its hopelessness, she murmurs a welcome to the random shaft which should put an end to her life.

But perhaps the greatest failure, if that term can be applied where so little is attempted is, Locksley. He has precisely the set of qualities, honour, disinterestedness, generosity, and justice, which always mark the outlaw of a novel, at least of a bad novel, and never the outlaw of real life—and he has no others. We have the more right to complain, when we compare this vulgarly-featured daub, which is affixed to such a name as Robin Hood, with the living portraits of Donald Bean, and Julian Avenel, and the Children of the Mist, and Rob Roy, which show how the painter can treat such a subject if he chooses. It is true that he was hampered by the historical features of

Robin Hood; but our very complaint is, that *circa vilem patulumque moratur orbem*, without venturing to add a shade, or a colour, which shall make the picture more individual, or less improbable.

But our censure must end here. In the rest of the characters we recognize the author of 'Waverley.' Nothing can be more bold than the conception, or more vigorous than the representation, of Richard and Friar Tuck. It is difficult to choose between subjects of such excellence —but of the two we think that the Friar is our favourite. Scarcely any other author could have ventured to engraft the outlaw on the priest, or could have prevented the union from being unnatural or hateful. But the humour, which is thrown over it, solders together its heterogeneous parts, and makes the compound amusing as it is original. As for Richard, we will confess that, long before Ivanhoe was written, he had been a subject of our meditation. We have often endeavoured to picture to our minds the appearance and the manners of the man, whom history appears to have amused herself with dressing in the colours of fable. Our author has done for us, what we never could do satisfactorily for ourselves. We acknowledge his Richard with the same conviction of his identity, and the same wonder that we could ever have supposed him anything different, with which we recognize, in a long separated friend, the features and address which we had in vain tried to imagine in his absence. Prince John, and Cedric, and Athelstan, and De Bracy, and Prior Aymer, and Gurth, are all good, though of coarser

materials—and even Higg the son of Snell, and Hubert the forester, and Father Dennett, though their outlines are indicated only by a few negligent strokes, stand out from the canvas with all the prominence of real existence.

But we find that it is at the scenes in which Richard, or the Friar, is engaged, that our volumes open of themselves—such as that in which, at their first meeting, the ascetic reserve, which the hermit seems to have adopted rather as a vehicle for his humour than as a cloak, relaxes before the bold frankness and irresistible smile of the Knight. Another is, the resurrection of the Friar from the dungeons of Front-de-Bœuf, with his 'captive to his bow and his halbert'—his account of his controversy with the Jew—and his memorable exchange of buffets with Richard, taken of course from the similar contest between Richard and Ardour, so amusingly related by Mr. Ellis. This, however, is hardly imitation—a real incident in Richard's life probably forms the basis, of which the old chronicler and the modern novelist have given us variations. But we have little doubt that the mode in which Rebecca repels the Templar, is borrowed from the celebrated scene in which Clarissa awes Lovelace by a similar menace of suicide. As they are scenes in which these great writers appear both to have put forth their strength, we would extract them, if our limits, already almost exceeded, permitted us, and as they do not, we recommend our readers to compare them: the cautious, minute, and reiterated strokes of Richardson afford a striking contrast to the bold semi-poetical rapidity of his modern rival.

We have little to say as to the story, but that it is totally deficient in unity of action, and consists, in fact, of a series of adventures which occurred, at about the same time, to a set of persons who happened to be collected at the lists of Ashby. The associations, however, which are connected with the actors and the times, and the vividness of the narration, prevent the interest from flagging—or rather renew it with each adventure, and the want of one concentrated interest may only make the different scenes more amusing, by allowing the reader leisure to pause and look round him as he passes.

Perhaps the scene that bears this examination worst, is the tournament. Our first objection to it is, that it is managed in what we should almost call a childish way, with a profuseness of success, first on the side of the challengers, and then on that of the hero, so glaringly improbable, as to destroy the reality produced by the general minuteness of description. We almost tremble at our rashness when we presume to add a doubt of the antiquarian accuracy of some of the details. We had always supposed the forfeiture of arms and horse to be a punishment reserved for unknightly conduct, and not the necessary result of the slightest preponderance of success on either side, in each encounter. Front-de-Bœuf is described as incurring this forfeiture, because he loses a stirrup; Malvoison, because he is unhelmed—and Grant Mesnil because his horse swerves; on these terms no challenger could have expected to retain his horse and arms during a day. We object, indeed, generally to our author's representation of a tournament as a personal contest, in

which one knight was to be declared conqueror, and the other conquered. Our ancestors seem to have considered it as a knightly game, in which the antagonists might mutually show their address, and which did not imply victory or defeat in either. We equally doubt the correctness of our author's distinction (vol. i., p. 169) between the effects of a blow on the helmet, and one on the shield—or rather we admit the distinction, but believe that the superiority attributed by him to the former, in fact belonged to the latter. As a general illustration of our remarks, we refer to the most detailed account which is extant of such a scene, in Froissart's description of the great tournament held by three French knights at St. Inglevere, lib. x. cap. 11, particularly to the courses run by Sir J. Rosseau, Sir P. Sherborne, and Sir Herchance.

But the most striking scene in the whole work, is the storming of Front-de-Bœuf's castle. Every reader must have felt the peculiar vividness with which the first assault is painted. Much as we have exceeded our usual limits, we will make a short extract from it.

It was not, however, by clamour that the contest was to be decided, and the desperate efforts of the assailants were met by an equally vigorous defence on the part of the besieged. The archers, trained by their woodland pastimes to the most effective use of the long bow, shot, to use the appropriate phrase of the time, so 'wholly together,' that no point at which a defender could show the least part of his person escaped their cloth-yard shafts. By this heavy discharge, which continued as thick and sharp as hail, while notwithstanding, every arrow had its individual aim, and flew by scores together against each embrasure and opening in the parapets, as well as at every

window where a defender either occasionally had post, or might be suspected to be stationed — by this sustained discharge, two or three of the garrison were slain, and several others wounded. But, confident in their armour of proof, and in the cover which their situation afforded, the followers of Front-de-Bœuf, and his allies, showed an obstinacy in defence proportioned to the fury of the attack, and replied with the discharge of their large cross-bows, as well as with their long bows, slings, and other missile weapons, to the close and continued shower of arrows; and, as the assailants were necessarily but indifferently protected, did considerably more damage than they received at their hand. The whizzing of shafts and missiles, on both sides, was only interrupted by the shouts which arose when either side inflicted or sustained some notable loss.

'And I must lie here like a bedridden monk,' exclaimed Ivanhoe, 'while the game that gives me freedom or death is played out by the hand of others! — Look from the window once again, kind maiden, but beware that you are not marked by the archers beneath — Look out once more, and tell me if they yet advance to the storm.'

With patient courage, strengthened by the interval which she had employed in mental devotion, Rebecca again took post at the lattice, sheltering herself, however, so as not to be visible from beneath.

'What dost thou see, Rebecca?' again demanded the wounded knight.

'Nothing but the cloud of arrows, flying so thick as to dazzle mine eyes, and to hide the bowmen who shoot them.'

'That cannot endure,' said Ivanhoe; 'if they press not right on to carry the castle by pure force of arms, the archery may avail but little against stone walls and bulwarks. Look for the knight of the fetterlock, fair Rebecca, and see how he bears himself; for as the leader is, so will his followers be.'

'I see him not,' said Rebecca.

'Foul craven!' exclaimed Ivanhoe; 'does he blench from the helm when the wind blows highest?'

'He blenches not! he blenches not!' said Rebecca, 'I see him now; he leads a body of men close under the outer barrier of the barbican.—They pull down the piles and palisades; they hew down the barriers with axes — His high black plume floats abroad over the throng, like a raven over the field of the slain.—They have made a breach in the barriers — they rush in — they are thrust back!—Front-de-Bœuf heads the defenders, I see his gigantic form above the press. They throng again to the breach, and the pass is disputed hand to hand and man to man. God of Jacob! it is the meeting of two fierce tides — the conflict of two oceans moved by adverse winds.'

She turned her head from the lattice, as if unable longer to endure a sight so terrible.

'Look forth again, Rebecca,' said Ivanhoe, mistaking the cause of her retiring; 'the archery must in some degree have ceased, since they are now fighting hand to hand — Look again, there is now less danger.'

Rebecca again looked forth, and almost immediately exclaimed, 'Holy prophets of the law! Front-de-Bœuf and the Black Knight fight hand to hand on the breach, amid the roar of their followers, who watch the progress of the strife—Heaven strike with the cause of the oppressed and of the captive!' She then uttered a loud shriek, and exclaimed, 'He is down! — he is down!'

'Who is down?' cried Ivanhoe; 'for our dear Lady's sake, tell me which has fallen?'

'The Black Knight,' answered Rebecca, faintly; then instantly again shouted with joyful eagerness — 'But no — but no! — the name of the Lord of Hosts be blessed! — He is on foot again, and fights as if there were twenty men's strength in his single arm — His sword is broken — he snatches an axe from a yeoman — he presses Front-de-Bœuf with blow on blow — The giant stoops and totters like an oak under the steel of the woodman — he falls — he falls!'

'Front-de-Bœuf!' exclaimed Ivanhoe.

'Front-de-Bœuf,' answered the Jewess; 'his men rush to the rescue, headed by the Templar — their united force compels the

champion to pause — They drag Front-de-Bœuf within the walls.'

'The assailants have won the barriers, have they not?' said Ivanhoe.

'They have — they have — and they press the besieged hard upon the outer wall; some plant ladders, some swarm like bees, and endeavour to ascend upon the shoulders of each other — down go stones, beams, and trunks of trees upon their heads, and as fast as they bear the wounded to the rear, fresh men supply their place in the assault — Great God, hast thou given men thine own image, that it should be thus cruelly defaced by the hands of their brethren!'

'Think not of that,' replied Ivanhoe; 'this is no time for such thoughts. Who yield?—who push their way?'

'The ladders are thrown down,' replied Rebecca, shuddering; 'the soldiers lie grovelling under them like crushed reptiles—The besieged have the better.'

'Saint George strike for us!' said the Knight; 'do the false yeomen give way?'

'No?' exclaimed Rebecca, 'they bear themselves right yeomanly—the Black Knight approaches the postern with his huge axe—the thundering blows which he deals, you may hear them above all the din and shouts of the battle—Stones and beams are hailed down on the bold champion—he regards them no more than if they were thistle-down or feathers.'

'By Saint John of Acre,' said Ivanhoe, raising himself joyfully on his couch, 'methought there was but one man in England that might do such a deed.'

'The postern gate shakes,' continued Rebecca; 'it crashes—it is splintered by his blows—they rush in—the out-work is won—Oh God!—they hurl the defenders from the battlements—they throw them into the moat—O men, if ye be indeed men, spare them that can resist no longer!'

'The bridge—the bridge which communicates with the castle—have they won that pass?' exclaimed Ivanhoe.

'No,' replied Rebecca, 'the Templar has destroyed the plank on

which they crossed—few of the defenders escaped with him into the castle—the shrieks and cries which you hear tell the fate of the others—Alas! I see that it is still more difficult to look upon victory than upon battle' (vol. ii. p. 292–299).

It may be worth while to examine the means by which this vividness has been obtained, and by which the reader feels himself more present at that part of this scene which is described by Rebecca, than at that which is described by the author in his own person. Had he really been present at that part which is described by the author, he would have seen and heard certain sensible objects, from which he might have inferred, with more or less propriety, that certain events were taking place. Had he been among the assailants, he might have inferred, from the number of men whom he saw bleeding and falling, the loss that his companions were suffering. Had he been on the ramparts, he might have drawn the same inference as to the defenders. From the effect produced on their armour by the arrows, and the mode in which they exposed themselves, he might have judged whether their armour were, or were not, of proof, and whether they did, or did not, trust to it. By accurate observation of the points struck by the arrows, he might have inferred whether they had, or had not, each an individual aim. And, if accustomed to such scenes, he might have judged whether the defence were more or less obstinate, or the attack more or less furious, than was usual. But, unless the reader's experience has been such as to associate in his mind these appearances and inferences, he must feel that, had he been

present, these appearances would not have suggested to him these inferences, and, being absent, the inferences do not suggest to him what must have been the appearances. He cannot, therefore, fancy himself to have been present at the event. He cannot even fancy the author to have been present *at the whole*, for no one person could have seen enough to make, with certainty, all these inferences. He must suppose him to have been informed by many other persons of the inferences drawn by them, from what they saw and heard, and from these accounts to have himself inferred the whole event. It is thus that a narrative is usually formed. And such a narrative may often enable us to judge perfectly of the *consequences* of an event, and leave us perfectly in the dark as to the actual *appearances* of which it really consisted.

To a man who has not seen one, the idea of a battle is vague. When we hear of an assault, or a charge, an advance, or a rout, we have an indistinct conception of blood, and fire, and smoke, red coats and blue coats, and gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbuss, and thunder; but it is a conception, of which the parts are inconsistent with one another, and all of them, we have no doubt, with the reality. Yet, when we have a full narration of a victory or a storm, we often think that we can estimate both the causes and the consequences of these events far better than a common soldier, though he may have been present at all that *one* person could witness, and may have a clear conception of the *things* of which we blindly use the names. Yet so far are we from fancying ourselves present at the scene,

that we cannot even fancy the relator to have been. When he tells of events which took place at different places at the same time, we know that he must be repeating the inferences drawn by different persons from what they saw in different situations. Such a narrative affords the greatest body of information, in the most concise form, to the intellect, but can suggest no new image to the imagination. It is, as we have said, the common and historical one.

We lose in the extent, but gain in the apparent authenticity of our information, when the narrator gives us only the inferences which might have been drawn by one witness. We may suppose him to have been that witness then, and are more disposed to believe his inferences correct, than if he had made them at second-hand, and also to sympathise with his feelings when a witness. This authenticity and power of creating sympathy are the advantages of novels in the first person: the narrow sources of information to which they are confined, is their defect. We approach a step nearer still to being actually present, when the narrator gives us, not his inferences, but the sensible objects themselves. This only can be called a description; but, to make it worth having, the objects must be interesting, or we should not listen—they must be new, or we should anticipate them — and they must be intelligible, or we could draw no conclusions from them. The remaining merit is, that the spectator should have been affected by them as we should have been ourselves. It is this which makes a traveller so much better a describer than a native — which would make us listen rather

to a passenger's account of a shipwreck than to that of a sailor. The native and the sailor are much more familiar with the objects they describe, and therefore describe them more correctly, but with that familiarity we do not sympathise. We wish for first impressions, because we wish to feel as we should have felt if we had been present.

Rebecca's description unites all these merits in a higher degree than any that we remember. The objects are interesting and perfectly new. The previous detail, and Ivanhoe's explanation, make them intelligible, and enable us to infer the progress of events; and her wonder, her horror, and her intense anxiety, are exactly the feelings which we should expect to feel ourselves, if exposed for the first time to such a scene as inactive spectators. We think that, in her place, we should have seen the same sights, heard the same sounds, drawn the same inferences, and felt the same emotions. And our perfect sympathy produces its usual effect, of making us fancy ourselves, as we read, in her situation.

Before we quit this scene, we must observe that it contains an heraldic error, remarkable in itself, when we consider the antiquarian knowledge of our author, and still more from its coincidence with a similar mistake in his great rival, Sir Walter Scott. The Black Knight bears what Rebecca calls a 'bar and padlock painted blue,' or, as Ivanhoe corrects her, 'a fetterlock and shackle bolt azure' on a black shield; that is, azure upon sable. This, as colour upon colour, is false heraldry. Now on the shield of Sir Walter's Marmion, a falcon

Soared sable in an azure field.

The same fault reversed. It is a curious addition to the coincidences of these two great writers, that, with all their minute learning on chivalrous points, they should both have been guilty of the same oversight.

The peculiarity, as well as the merit, of 'Ivanhoe,' has seduced us beyond our usual limits. We are in less danger of exceeding them with the 'MONASTERY.' Without disputing the general verdict, which places this below the rest of our author's works, we shall endeavour to ascertain the grounds on which it may be supposed to be founded. We believe the principal deficiency lies in, what is usually our author's principal excellence, the female characters. In general, his men add to the boldness and animation of the scene, but his women support almost all its interest. Perhaps this must always be the case where both are equally well drawn. We sympathise more readily with simple than with compound feelings; and therefore less easily with those characters, the different ingredients of which have, by mutual subservience, been moulded into one uniform mass, than with those in which they stand unmixed and contrasted. Courage restrained by caution, and liberality by prudence, loyalty with a view only to the ultimate utility of power, and love never forgetting itself in its object, are the attributes of men. Their purposes are formed on a general balance of compensating motives, and pursued only while their means appear not totally inadequate. The greater susceptibility which is always the charm, and sometimes the misfortune, of

women, deprives them of the same accurate view of the proportion of different objects. The one upon which they are intent, whether it be a lover, a parent, a husband, a child, a king, a preacher, a ball, or a bonnet, swallows up the rest. Hence the enthusiasm of their loyalty, the devotedness of their affection, the abandonment of self, and the general vehemence of emotion, which, in fiction as well as in reality, operate contagiously on our feelings. But our author has, in the 'Monastery,' neglected the power of representing the female character, which he possesses so eminently, and, in general, uses so liberally. The heroine is milk and water, or anything still more insipid; Dame Glendinning and Tibbie are the common furniture of a farm-house; and Mysie Happer and poor Catherine, though beautiful, are mere sketches.

This deficiency might have been supplied by the skilful complication and disentanglement of a well-constructed plot. But all that resembles a plot is the union of Halbert Glendinning with his demure, pale-faced love—and that is effected by mere accident, by his introduction to Murray, and by Murray's unforeseen march to Kennaquair. We cannot help suspecting that our author began to tell his story with very vague plans for its progress. We can conceive him to have sketched the characters of Halbert, Edward, Mary, Boniface, Eustace, Warden, and Shafton—to have resolved to marry Halbert and Mary, make Edward a monk, say a good deal about the 'Monastery,' and bring in, and get rid of, the Euphuist as he could; and then to have set to work, trusting that the White Lady would help

him whenever he stuck fast. His trust was certainly well founded, for he could not doubt the willingness or the power of a being who was to act with no assignable objects, and to be restrained by no assignable limits. With such machinery, constructing stories is easy. But he must know that such props to the author are stumbling-blocks to the reader. We tolerate a supernatural agent only when

> Actoris partes, officiumque virile
> Sustinet——

when its purposes and means are referable to some standard. Without such a standard, we can neither enter into the conduct of a being that appears to have no motives, nor estimate the skill of an author who has not let us know what he intends to represent.

A natural consequence of writing without a well-digested plan is, disproportion of parts. Too long a beginning is a common fault of our author's, but we know no instance of it so glaring as the work before us. Until the morning when Halbert leaves his companions at their lessons, and runs up the glen to invoke the White Lady, the real story can scarcely be said to begin. Edward, Mary, and Halbert, till then, are children, and a whole volume has been employed in introducing to us the trite characters of Espeth, and Tibbie, and Martin, and of the fierce borderer, the good-natured luxurious abbot, and the pious sub-prior; and in relating the absolutely trifling legerdemain which transports to and fro the black book. We could almost venture to assert that

the first nine chapters might be compressed without injury into nine pages.

And even when the narrative is at last set flowing from the capacious cistern of the first volume, it breaks, almost immediately, like a stream in a flat country, into three or four independent channels. We have the stories of Mysie, and Sir Piercy Shaftone, of Halbert, of Henry Warden, and of the inhabitants of the convent and of the tower of Glendinning, all diverging in different directions, and connected only by terminating in Murray's march. The only individual for whom we feel much interest is poor Mysie, for she is almost the only one who acts on natural motives. Halbert is a fine high-spirited youth, but when we are told that his character is altered by his being conversant with high matters, and being called to a destiny beyond that of other men, and by his communications with a supernatural being, and find that his fate is to be swayed by the capricious exertions of her indefinite power—the one ceases to be intelligible, and the other to be interesting. Henry Warden's perils are too soon over, and Eustace's begin too late, and the motives of both are too artificial, to be the subjects of much sympathy. Espeth, Tibbie, and Mary cannot be interesting, for they do nothing and suffer nothing; and the only scene in which Edward is so, is that in which he resolves to assume the cowl. As for Sir Piercy, he is as incomprehensible as the White Lady. We might let his Euphuism pass, for it would be rash to set any bounds to affectation, but from the manner in which the story of his birth is mentioned

by Stawarth Bolton, it could not have been a matter of deep mystery; and if it had, his conduct, when the bodkin is presented to him, is the most absurd piece of exaggeration even in our author's pages, subject as they are to that fault. And the conclusion is as hurried as the commencement is drawled out. The troops of Murray and Foster are let down *e machina* on the stage, to kill Julian, Kate, and Christie, betray Shafton's genealogy, change Abbot Boniface into Abbot Eustace, and, *de more*, marry the two pair of lovers.

And yet no reader can doubt the genuineness of the 'Monastery.' 'Many men, many women, and many children' might have avoided its faults—but we know no man or woman, besides 'the author of Waverley,' who could have painted the scene which follows the entrance of Halbert and Henry Warden into the castle of Avenel, the meeting between Warden and Eustace, or Halbert's ride to the scene where the battle was fought. To *one* other name alone could we ascribe the poetry, so wild, so varied, and so powerful, that flows from the White Lady; and *he* is a champion who seems to have retired from the literary lists, and is suspected to see, without bitter regret, his proudly-earned honours matched, perhaps eclipsed, by those of his masked successor.

But the great merit of the 'Monastery' is, that it is a foundation for the 'Abbot.' This not only relieves, in a great measure, the reader from the slow detail, or the perplexing retracings and éclaircissemens, which detain or

interrupt him in a narrative that is purely fictitious, but is an improvement on some of the peculiar advantages of one that is historical. In the latter, the hard and meagre outline of his previous knowledge seldom contains more than the names and mutual relations of the principal personages, and what they had previously *done*, with very little of what they had previously *felt*. But where one fiction is founded on another we are introduced, not merely to persons who are notorious to us, but to old acquaintances and friends. The Knight of Avenel, the Abbot Ambrosius, and the Gardener Blinkhoolie, are the Halbert, and Edward, and Boniface, into whose early associations and secret feelings we had been admitted. We meet them as we meet, in real life, with those whom we have known in long-past times, and in different situations, and are interested in tracing, sometimes the resemblance, and sometimes the contrast, between what is past and what is present; in observing the effects of new circumstances in modifying or confirming their old feelings, or in eliciting others which before lay unperceived. We view with interest the fiery freedom of Halbert's youth ripened into the steady and stern composure of the approved soldier and skilful politician; and when, as Knight of Avenel, he sighs for birth and name, we recognise the feelings that drove him from the obscure security of a church vassal, to seek with his sword the means of ranking with those proud men that despised his clownish poverty. And when Ambrose acknowledges that, bent as he is by affliction, he has not forgotten the effect of beauty on the heart of youth

—that even in the watches of the night, broken by the thoughts of an imprisoned Queen, a distracted kingdom, a church laid waste and ruinous, come other thoughts than those that these suggest, and feelings that belong to an earlier and happier course of life; a single allusion sends us back through the whole intervening time, and we see him again in the deep window recess of Glendearg, and Mary's looks of simple yet earnest anxiety watching for his assistance in their childish studies. The allusion would have been pretty, but how inferior, if Ambrose had been a new character, and we had been forced to account for it by some vague theory as to his former history.

The 'Abbot' has, however, far greater advantages over its predecessor than those, great as they are, that arise from their relative situation. We escape from the dull tower of Glendearg, with its narrow valley and homely inmates, to Edinburgh, and Holyrood House, and Lochleven Castle, and the field of Langside, to high dames and mighty earls, and exchange the obscure squabbling of the hamlet and the convent, for events where the passions of individuals decided the fate of kingdoms, and above all, we exchange unintelligible fairyism for human actors and human feelings.

It is true there is a sorceress on the stage, but one endued with powers far greater for evil or for good than the White Lady.

History has never described, or fiction invented, a character more truly tragic than Queen Mary. The most fruitful imagination could not have adorned her with

more accomplishments, or exposed her to greater extremes of fortune, or alternated them with greater rapidity. And the mystery which, after all the exertions of her friends and enemies, still rests on her conduct, and which our author has most skilfully left as dark as he found it, prevents our being either shocked or unmoved by her final calamities. The former would have been the case, if her innocence could have been established. We could not have borne to see such a being plunged, by a false accusation, from such a height into such misery. The latter would have followed, if she could have been proved to be guilty. Her sufferings, bitter as they were, were less unmixed than those of Bothwell. He too endured a long imprisonment, but it was in a desolate climate, without the alleviations which even Elizabeth allowed to her rival, without the hope of escape, or the sympathy of devoted attendants: such was his misery, that his reason sunk under it. And though his sufferings were greater than those of his accomplice, if such she were, his crime was less. He had not to break the same restraints of intimate connection and of sex. But nobody could read a tragedy of which his misfortunes formed the substance; because we are sure of his guilt, they would excite no interest. While we continue to doubt hers, Mary's will be intensely affecting.

It is remarkable that Alfieri, who must have felt peculiar interest in a Stuart, should have failed conspicuously in the tragedy of which she is the heroine. By selecting the murder of Darnley for his subject, he

gave up almost all the advantages that her history afforded. His 'Maria Stuarda' is merely an affectionate, sweet-tempered wife, who loses a sulky husband. She incurs neither guilt nor danger; and the story, after languishing through five declamatory uneventful acts, breaks off, at the first incident, which gives the reader hopes that something is to happen, and leaves him to guess what that something must have been, not from the situation of the characters, with which it is totally irreconcilable, but from an obscure prophetic denunciation.

But in the 'Abbot,' Mary fell into the hands of an author that deserved her. He had not only to paint the queen, the beauty, and the accomplished woman, to embody all our ideas of the majestic, the pleasing, and the brilliant, but to shade his picture with the weaknesses that were necessary to its probability, without diminishing its fascination; to allude constantly to past events, without implying the innocence or guilt of the principal character, and to make us lament the failure of schemes, under which, if they had succeeded, we should probably ourselves be at this instant suffering. Never was there a more difficult attempt, or a more splendid execution.

For a purpose, of which we shall speak hereafter, he has given her a companion from that class of characters which it seems his delight to draw, and we are sure it is ours to read; in which the arch buoyancy and lightheartedness of youth are united to the arduous designs and firm resolves of maturer age; and where all that is lovely, and playful, and fragile in woman, is mixed with

the deep cares and adventurous enterprise of man. Not even in Flora Mac Ivor, or Diana Vernon, is this union more bewitching than in Catherine Seyton.

Our author, to be sure, was put upon his mettle. The hero was to betray his trust, to desert the religion of which he began to feel the truth, and to engage in schemes, the success of which endangered the ruin of his country, and was certain to effect that of the protectors of his infancy. Strong temptations were necessary, and strong temptations are applied; we feel that an older and more thinking mind than Roland's might not have resisted them.

We admit the probability and the interest of the narrative, and yet we wish that it could have been altered. The picture of stern duty opposed to violent temptation is only safe, either where, as in the case of Jeanie Deans, duty prevails, or where its failure, as in that of Lucy Ashton, is followed by misfortunes which are to be the subjects of our sympathy. The rule of poetical justice has obtained such currency, that whatever the author rewards he is supposed to approve. Our author appears to have felt this objection, and to have endeavoured to obviate it by expedients, which strike us as aggravations. He makes Roland rejoice that Morton's interruption enabled him to part from the Regent, without plighting his troth to fulfil his orders; and feels himself at liberty, without any breach of honour, to contribute to the queen's escape, as soon as he has intimated to Dryfesdale that he refuses trust. But, when he proceeded on his office, after a full explanation from the person who entrusted him with it,

of the duties to which it was attached, it is mere jesuitism to say that he was not bound by its conditions, because he had given to them only a tacid consent; or that he could be released from them, after having acquired, by a long apparent acquiescence, the means of defeating them, by any declaration even to his principal, much less to a subordinate agent.

We do not deny that his situation was one of extreme difficulty, that to have refused Murray's trust would have been immediate ruin, and that every motive which can soften, and subdue, and delude the firmest principle and the clearest perception was accumulated to induce him to betray it. In real life, all would forgive, some would even admire, his conduct; but a writer of fiction has no right to dress what is fundamentally wrong in a covering that can attract sympathy or admiration. *He* is not exposed to the same difficulties as his heroes, and has no right to make their reward *depend* on that part of their conduct which does not deserve unmixed approbation. Still less has he a right to sanction a parley between duty and passion, and to countenance the sophistry that attacks the understanding through the heart. To him, still more forcibly than to Hiero, may Pindar's caution be applied: —

ἀ-
ψευδεῖ πρὸς ἄκμονι χάλ-
κευε γλῶσσαν.
Εἴ τι καὶ φλαῦρον παραιθύσ-
σει, μέγα τοι φέρεται
πὰρ σέθεν. ΠΟΛΛΩΝ ΤΑΜΙΑΣ
ΕΣΣΙ.

But this blemish, the importance of which we must not dissemble, is the only material fault we have to find with the story. It is, in general, beautifully conceived, and beautifully executed. The author has selected the only part of Mary's life which, from the magnitude of the events, their connection with each other, and the short time within which they occurred, affords fit materials for poetical narrative. We have a beginning which excites curiosity, a middle which keeps it up, and an end by which it is satisfied. And the loves of Catherine and Roland are skilfully interwoven with the fate of their mistress. Never was a double plot better connected. From our first entrance into the castle of Loch Leven, to the last signal of adieu waved by Mary in the Firth of Galloway, our interest is concentrated on the three principal characters, interrupted by no episodes, and broken by few improbabilities.

We are criticising an author too enterprising to be deterred by any difficulties of execution. We have no doubt, therefore, that in suppressing the visit paid by the Regent to Mary during her imprisonment, he decided wisely; but we must own that we were watching for it as we read, and felt disappointed when we found that it was to be omitted. When we recollect the relation in which Murray stood to the principal persons in the castle, the circumstances under which he met the sister to whom he owed so much, whom he once served so faithfully, and appears to have once loved so truly, now deposed for his advantage, and imprisoned by his authority, the mixed

feelings of pride and shame with which he must have been received by Lady Lochleven, the outward deference that must have covered the fear and dislike of George Douglas, the unrestrained hatred of Catherine Seyton, and the awe of Roland Græme, we cannot conceive a finer picture, than would have been the result of such a subject in the hands of such a master. Perhaps he did not like to injure his fine sketch of Murray's character by the unnecessary cruelty of that visit; perhaps he feared that he must degrade that of Roland, by forcing from him promises of a fidelity that he was to abandon. Whatever were his motives for the suppression, we cannot well doubt, as we said before, that they were sufficient; but we regret that his management of the plot made it necessary.

Where all is so excellent, it is difficult to select particular points. We are not sure whether we prefer the busy events at Holyrood House, the interview in which Roland yields himself up to Catherine, as she signs the cross over his forehead, the scene in which Mary anticipates one blithesome day at their blithesome bridal, or the morning that she awakes at West Niddie. Perhaps they are all inferior to the battle, painted in the favourite manner of our author, and of Sir Walter Scott, from the point of view occupied by the ladies and the squires who protect them. But there is no end of enumerating beauties, and we have not time or inclination to search for blemishes.

In 'KENILWORTH' our author is again upon tragic ground;

a ground which, either from the advantages which we have ascribed to tragedy, in its independence of any concealment of the catastrophe, and wider admission of historical subjects, or from the peculiar bent of his talents, he always appears to us, on a reperusal, to tread most successfully. But though 'Kenilworth' must rank high among his works, we think it inferior, as a whole, to his other tragedies, the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' the historical part of 'Waverley,' and the 'Abbot,' both in materials and in execution. Amy Robsart and Elizabeth occupy nearly the same space upon the canvas as Catherine Seyton and Mary. But almost all the points of interest, which are divided between Amy and Elizabeth, historical recollections, beauty, talents, attractive virtues and unhappy errors, exalted rank and deep misfortune, are accumulated in Mary; and we want altogether that union of the lofty and the elegant, of enthusiasm and playfulness, which enchanted us in Catherine.

Amy is a beautiful specimen of that class which long ago furnished Desdemona; the basis of whose character is conjugal love, whose charm consists in its purity and its devotedness, whose fault springs from its undue prevalence over filial duty, and whose sufferings are occasioned by the perverted passions of him, to whom it is addressed. Elizabeth owes almost all her interest, to our early associations, and to her marvellous combination of the male and female dispositions, in those points in which they seem least compatible. The representation of such a character loses much of its interest in history, and would

be intolerable in pure fiction. In the former, its peculiarities are softened down by the distance, and Elizabeth appears a fine but not an uncommon object, a great, unamiable sovereign; and the same peculiarities, shown in the microscopic exaggeration of pure fiction, would, if judged only by the rules of fiction, offend as unnatural; but supported by the authority of history, they would be most striking. A portrait might be drawn of Elizabeth, uniting the magnanimous courage, the persevering but governable anger, the power of weighing distant against immediate advantages, and the brilliant against the useful, and of subjecting all surrounding minds, which dignify men, and men only of the most manly character, with the most craving vanity, the most irritable jealousy, the meanest duplicity, and the most capricious and unrelenting spite, that ever degraded the silliest and most hateful of her sex.

Our author has not, we think, made the most of his opportunities. He has complied with the laws of poetical consistency, without recollecting that, in this instance, the notoriety of Elizabeth's history warranted their violation. Instead of pushing to the utmost the opposing qualities that formed her character, he has softened even the incidents that he has directly borrowed. When Leicester knelt before her at Kenilworth, 'ere she raised him, she passed her hand over his head, so near as *almost* to touch his long curled and perfumed hair, and with a movement of fondness that seemed to intimate, that she would, *if she dared*, have made the motion a slight

caress.' Listen to Sir James Melvil's account of the real occurrence. 'I was required to stay till he was made Earl of Leicester, which was done at Westminster, the Queen herself helping to put on his ceremonial, he sitting upon his knees [kneeling] before her with great gravity; but she could not refrain from putting her hands into his neck, *smilingly tickling him*, the French ambassador and I standing by. Then she turned, asking at me how I liked him?' Again, when she discovers Leicester's conduct, in which every cause of personal irritation is most skilfully accumulated, she punishes him only by a quarter of an hour's restraint under the custody of the earl marshal. When, at a later period, and under circumstances of much less aggravation, she detected his marriage with Lady Essex, she actually imprisoned him. Our author has not ventured on the full vehemence of her affection or her rage. But, after all, his picture of the lion-hearted Queen, though it might perhaps have been improved by the admission of stronger contrasts, is so vivid, and so magnificent, that we can hardly wish it other than it is.

We are not sure that we have suggested any improvement in Elizabeth. We have none to offer in Leicester. His struggles under the contest between love, ambition, and vanity, the subservience of his spirits and his feelings to the associations of time and place; Amy's power when present, and weakness when absent; his half-formed resolution to abandon for her the court, and its flight at the thought, not of what he would lose, but of what his rivals

would gain; his devotion to Elizabeth, only equalled by his fear, are the best picture extant of the man who, without hereditary rank or fortune, the son and the grandson of attainted and forfeited traitors, without talents in affairs or in war, a dangerous counsellor and an unfortunate commander, stained by the imputation of almost every crime, and the commission of many, unfaithful to his mistress in love, and hurtful in business, managed to deceive, and practically to retain in subjection, for thirty years, the most jealous woman, the most imperious sovereign, and the most acute discerner to whose scrutiny his vices and deficiencies could have been exposed; for whose sake she endured, during her whole life, the slander to which she was most sensible, and reposed the land-defence of her kingdom, at the time when the Armada threatened its greatest danger, in hands notoriously incompetent.

Varney belongs to the class, so rare, if it really exist, of unmixed villains, in whom, with vigorous intellectual powers, the moral sense is totally deficient, and who accordingly select their objects with perfect selfishness, and pursue them with unrelenting earnestness, softened by no compunction, and awed by no fear but that of failure. Our author apologizes for his introduction, by assuring us, from time to time, that there *are* such men. We are willing to surrender our previous opinion to the authority of one so intimately acquainted with human nature; but the necessity of this apology ought, perhaps, to have led him to doubt the propriety of introducing a character that

required it. If the mixture of human feeling, which we think would have been found in the real Varney, could have been infused into the fictitious one, without defeating the plan of the novel, it certainly would have improved it, by rendering more natural one of the principal characters.

We are reminded by Tressilian of the Wilfred of Rokeby. They are both executions of the difficult task of giving dignity to an unsuccessful lover. They are both men of deep thought and retired habits; both nourish an early, long, and unfortunate attachment. In both it sinks so deep into the mind, that it becomes their dream by night, and their vision by day; mixes itself with every source of interest and enjoyment, and when blighted and withered by final disappointment, it seems, in both, as if the springs of the heart were dried up along with it. But as Tressilian is to support more of the plot than Wilfred, he has a firmer bodily and mental temperament; and his mind, instead of having mere sorrows to brood over, is steeled by injuries to avenge. They are fine variations of what appears to be one conception.

Blount and Raleigh are very good, particularly Blount at his knighthood; but when we arrive at the end of the journey, at the beginning of which they were so specially introduced to us, and during the course of which they have occupied so much of our time, and find that they have no influence whatever on the catastrophe, we are inclined to ask what procured us the honour of their company? Our author sometimes reminds us of the magician, that accom-

panied Benvenuto Cellini to the Coliseum, and whose misfortune it was, that his powers of evoking spirits were greater than his means of employing or of removing them. No man has more influence in the vasty deep. They come when he does call them; but for anything they have to do, it often seems that they might as well have been left there.

The fault of Raleigh and Blount is, that they are supernumeraries. Wayland Smith is not that; but if another agent could have been found to conduct the countess to Kenilworth, we cannot but wish that the whole episode of 'Wayland the cunning smith' (though the clink of his ghostly hammer still frightens the children of Uffington and Compton), and of the semi-miraculous cure of Sussex, could have been omitted. They are an unnecessary waste of time and violation of probability. But a legendary hint affects our author like a sound which reaches the ear in imperfect sleep. He instantly builds on it a superstructure of persons and events, as disproportioned to its origin as if the mouse had brought forth the mountain.

The last volume and the opening of the first are, we think, superior to the rest. The author seems to have found some difficulty in filling the interval between Amy's parting with Leicester at Cumnor, and her journey to Kenilworth. For this purpose we have the episodes of Wayland Smith, and Sussex, and Raleigh; the pleasing anachronism of Shakspeare; the bear-bait taken from the contemporary cockney description of such a scene

reprinted by Andrews;* Wayland's introduction to Amy in the disguise of a pedlar, borrowed from the common stock of Novel-ism; and the scene in which Janet detects the poison, copied almost faithfully from Artaserse. But as the action proceeds, as the early events begin, in their consequences, to bear more and more upon each other, and the clashing interests to muster their forces on each side, our author's genius seems roused as the demands on him increase. Like Sir Walter's 'Minstrel,' when at last 'he caught the measure wild,' he is *cursu concitus heros.* Nothing can be finer than the evening which Amy passes in Mervyn's tower—more striking than the conclusion of her interview with Leicester, or more affecting than its beginning. The paleness that indicates Varney's purpose to Foster, and is told only by the dialogue, is a splendid imitation of Buckingham's question to Dorset, in Richard the Third:

> Look I so pale, Lord Dorset, as the rest?

At every page the catastrophe seems impending, yet none of the events which defer it appear forced. And so skilful is the preparation of the mine which is to overturn Leicester's confidence in his wife, that, though all the circumstances by which his jealousy is to be fired have taken place under our eyes, we are unconscious of her danger, till Varney's rapid recapitulation lights the train.

* Orson Pinner's supplication (for the outlines of the story are true) was in fact successful. The biped performers were restrained from acting on certain days in the week, lest they should interfere with the quadrupeds.

> Then come at once the lightning and the thunder,
> And distant echoes tell that all is rent asunder.*

It is a fault perhaps of the conclusion, that it is too uniformly tragical. In 'Waverley' and the 'Abbot,' the happiness of Rose and Waverley, and of Catherine and Roland, is entwined, like the ivy of a ruined window, with the calamities of their unfortunate associates, and relieves us from one unvaried spectacle of misery. And even in the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' our author relents from what appears to have been his earlier intention, restores Bucklaw to health, and pensions Craigengelt, and suffers the whole weight of the catastrophe to fall only on his hero and heroine. But in 'Kenilworth,' the marriage of Wayland Smith and Janet (an event which scarcely excites any interest) is the only instance of mercy. The immediate circumstances of Amy's death, as she rushes to meet, what she supposes to be, her husband's signal, almost pass the limit that divides pity from horror. It is what Foster calls it, 'a seething of the kid in the mother's milk.' All our author's reiterations of Varney's devilishness, do not render it credible. Tressilian, Sir Hugh Robsart, Varney, Foster, Demetrius, Lambourne, almost every agent in the story, perishes prematurely or violently. Elizabeth is reserved for the sorrows of disappointed love and betrayed confidence, and Leicester for misery, such as even our author has not ventured to describe.

* We wish we could persuade our author to let us have this 'old play.' We suspect that he has the only copy—and if the rest resembles his quotations, it will be worth all our new ones.

We doubt, also, the propriety of utterly confounding all biographical truth, in a life so well known as Leicester's. We do not object to the alteration of events that are neither notorious nor important, nor to supplying the details of what is imperfectly known. The reader of the 'Abbot' may know, if he choose to enquire, that Murray was not in Scotland at the time when Mary is represented to have signed the relinquishment of her power. And he has no reason to suppose that Sir Halbert Glendinning, or Catherine Seyton, or Roland Græme ever existed. But, as to Murray, if we discover the variation of the story told in the 'Abbot' from that of other histories, we treat it merely as one of the discrepancies frequently found in the details of different historians. It does not diminish our belief in the fidelity of the general outline: and as to the imaginary figures, with which our author has adorned his canvas, if we have no reason to suppose that they have, we have none to suppose that they have not, existed. They are neither supported nor contradicted by our previous opinions; if they fit in well, we admit them with confidence, as supplementary details. But all who started with an acquaintance with Leicester's history, or have been led by our author to examine it—and we think that these classes embrace all his readers—must feel that neither his detail nor his outline bears any resemblance to the truth. Leicester's union with Amy appears to have been a marriage *de convenance*, publicly celebrated, when both parties were very young, and long before Elizabeth's accession; and from which he was freed, after having publicly sup-

ported it for several years, by her violent and mysterious death, as soon as the situation of England and Scotland opened to him a double hope of royal alliance. Many years after occurred the celebrated visit to Kenilworth — and at a still later period, his marriage with Lady Essex, the discovery of which occasioned the well-known burst of fury in Elizabeth. Such a perversion of known facts not only deprives the story of the credibility which an historical fiction derives from our conviction that the outline is true, but even of the temporary belief that we give to a well-constructed tale. Even our author's ordinary legal accuracy fails him. Leicester's treason could not, as he supposes (vol. iii. 213), have enriched his widow; it would have forfeited her dower. Nor is his topography more correct. We think he never was at Cumnor—we are sure he never rode from thence to Woodstock—or found a bog near Wayland Smith's stone.

We have dwelt so long on the novels in detail, that our readers will gladly be spared any general remarks. Our parting exhortation to the 'Great Unknown' must be, if he would gratify the impatience of his contemporary readers, to write as much and as quickly as possible: if he would transmit his name to posterity, in such a manner as to do full justice to his extraordinary powers, to bestow a little more time and leisure in giving them their scope; in concentrating the excellencies which he has shown to be within his reach, and in avoiding the blemishes which he cannot but have taste to perceive.

If we could fancy the summit of a poet's ambition, it would be, that he should render classical every scene which he described, and embalm among our recollections every character and incident that he imagined—that the appearance of one of his works should be among the public events of the year—that its perusal and discussion should instantly engross every eye and every tongue—that, as the buzz of criticism subsided, public attention should turn to what was to follow — that a general whisper should tell that he was again employed — that contradictory rumours should state, with more and more decision, the character and the name of the unfinished work — that the different opinions should each find supporters, and even partisans, until the oracular annunciation 'The —— by the author of —— is in the press,' should give certainty on one point, and stimulate curiosity and anticipation on every other, — and that at length, like the castle in the vale of St. John, the magical edifice should at once shine forth, from among the mists which concealed it, and display the royal palace, the feudal castle, the modern mansion, the border tower, the highland sheeling, or the Zetland burgh, which the invisible architect thought fit residence for his living creations.

Dazzling, however, as this eminence appears from below, it is, perhaps, less conducive to the happiness of him who has attained it, than many of the humble points of his ascent. He can scarcely hope that any of his subsequent efforts will exceed the excited expectation of the public; he must constantly fear that they will disappoint it. In this, perhaps, lies the great superiority of speculative pur-

suits over those of the imagination. Every step, which the mathematician, or the chemist, or the political economist has made, facilitates his subsequent advances. He has, probably, discovered a new instrument of calculation or of decomposition, or a general principle with which he may tie up the scattered facts that were before independent burthens on his memory; or he has detected the fallacy, or the omissions, which threw doubt and inconsistency over his reasonings. He covers at every succeeding stride a wider space.

But the earlier works of a poet have the same advantage over his subsequent ones, which the earlier poets had over their successors, or which the first settlers in a new colony enjoy over those who follow them: they preoccupy whatever is most beautiful or most productive; they exhaust the scenes, the characters, and the incidents which are best fitted for description, or which he is best fitted to describe. To revert to our colonial metaphor, he must either break up new ground of inferior fertility, or apply additional labour, with a diminished effect, to what is already in cultivation. Our author has, in the work before us, employed both expedients with characteristic boldness. Nothing can be more barren, than the waste land which he has endeavoured to reclaim—nothing more overcropped, than the old ground which he has ventured still to continue under the plough.

Most of his former works derived interest from their mere subjects: the fore-ground was filled with distinct portraits of persons, whom we had long been endeavouring

to make out in the distance of history; his background was formed of scenery magnificent in its elements, and splendid from its variety. But the characters of the 'PIRATE' are purely fictitious, and the scene is laid in a country too obscure, until our author's genius stamped it with notoriety, to excite attention, and too uniform to detain it. What could be done for Zetland he has done: he has painted with his usual vivid accuracy the few natural objects which it afforded,—the rocky promontory, the inland sea, the fierceness of a northern ocean, and the caprice of a northern climate, with its misty calm and irresistible tempest; and he has suited to it, with admirable consistency, the habits and character of its inhabitants. The promise of his motto is fully performed—

> ——————nothing of them
> But doth suffer a sea-change.

Their furniture and their food are, almost wholly, the produce or the gifts of the sea;—all their language and conversation is insular, and almost fishy; limited by the narrow experience, and full of the maritime superstitions and associations, of their situation. In his usual pursuit of national, as well as individual, contrast, he has described his Zetlanders before they became assimilated in feeling to their Scottish proprietors and neighbours, and has attributed to them, in a mitigated degree, the hostility towards the new comers, which gives spirit to his Saxons in 'Ivanhoe.'

It is at Burgh-Westra, the residence of Magnus Troil, the Cedric of the piece, that the story commences: the

previous chapters having introduced to us Mordaunt Mertoun, a poor youth on whom the office, not a very high one in our author's court, of *héros en chef*, is forced; and to his father, Basil Mertoun, a misanthropic recluse, marked by the mystery—the silence—the gloom—the general apathy and occasional impetuosity—the sternness and the pride, which at once indicate, to a practised novel reader, one of the numerous family of retired criminals, or injured lovers. Minna and Brenda, the daughters of Magnus Troil, we must describe in our author's own words: —

From her mother, Minna inherited the stately form and dark eyes, the raven locks and finely-pencilled brows, which showed she was, on one side at least, a stranger to the blood of Thule. Her cheek,

'O call it fair, not pale,'

was so slightly and delicately tinged with the rose, that many thought the lily had an undue proportion in her complexion. But in that predominance of the paler flower, there was nothing sickly or languid; it was the true natural complexion of health, and corresponded in a peculiar degree with features which seemed calculated to express a contemplative and high-minded character.

The scarce less beautiful, equally lovely, and equally innocent Brenda, was of a complexion as differing from her sister, as they differed in character, taste, and expression. Her profuse locks were of that paly brown, which receives from the passing sunbeam a tinge of gold, but darkens again when the ray has passed from it. Her eye, her mouth, the beautiful row of teeth, which, in her innocent vivacity, were frequently disclosed; the fresh yet not too bright glow of a healthy complexion, tinging a skin like the drifted snow, spoke her genuine Scandinavian descent. A fairy form, less tall than that of Minna, but even more finely moulded into symmetry—a careless and almost childish lightness of step—an eye

that seemed to look on every object with pleasure, from a natural and serene cheerfulness of disposition, attracted even more general admiration than the charms of her sister, though, perhaps, that which Minna did excite, might be of a more intense as well as a more reverential character.

Mordaunt has as yet lived with them both in perfect intimacy, but without apparent preference of one to the other, 'treating them as an affectionate brother might treat two sisters, so equally dear to him, that a breath would turn the scale of affection.' After a visit of a week, immediately preceding the commencement of the narrative, he leaves them to return to his father's residence, Jarlshof, at the foot of Sumburgh Head, the south-eastern extremity of the island.

He is forced by a storm to take refuge at Harfra, the abode of Triptolemus Yellowley, an agricultural enthusiast, of mixed Scottish and Yorkshire blood, and one of the Bores of the work (for unhappily there is a double allowance), whom fate, for his own and our misfortune, had transported, with his sister Babie, to this unfertile and prejudiced region. As the storm increased in violence—

a woman, tall enough almost to touch the top of the door with her cap, stepped into the room, signing the cross as she entered, and pronouncing with a solemn voice 'the blessings of God and Saint Ronald on the open door, and their braid malison and mine upon close-handed churls.' The speaker was as striking in appearance as extravagantly lofty in her pretensions and in her language. She might well have represented on the stage, so far as features, voice, and stature were concerned, the Bonduca or Boadicea of the Britons, or the sage Velleda, Aurinia, or any other fated Pythoness, who ever led to battle a tribe of the ancient Goths. Her

features were high and well formed, and would have been handsome but for the ravages of time, and the effects of exposure to the severe weather of her country. Age, and perhaps sorrow, had quenched in some degree the fire of a dark blue eye, whose hue almost approached to black, and had sprinkled snow on such part of her tresses as had escaped from under her cap, and were dishevelled by the rigour of the storm.

Such was the appearance of Norna of the Fitful Head, upon whom many of the inhabitants of the island looked with observance, many with fear, and almost all with a sort of veneration.

Norna's magic — for she has the supernatural pretensions which sometimes dignify, and more often render absurd, her prototypes in our author's works—is that of her Norwegian ancestors: it is exercised on the elements. Subsequently (our author can scarcely refrain from saying consequently) to her chanting a Runic invocation, the tempest subsides, and Mordaunt regains his home. But the next morning, when he and his father looked from the verge of the precipice, of which the landward slope was terminated by their house —

the wide sea still heaved and swelled with the agitation of the yesterday's storm, which had been far too violent to subside speedily. The tide, therefore, poured on the headland with a fury deafening to the ear, and dizzying to the eye, threatening instant destruction to whatever might be at the time involved in its current. The sight of nature in her magnificence, or in her beauty, or in her terrors, has at all times an overpowering interest, which even habit cannot greatly weaken; and both father and son sate themselves down on the cliff to look out upon that unbounded war of waters, which rolled in their wrath to the foot of the precipice.

At once Mordaunt whose eyes were sharper, and probably his attention more alert, started up and exclaimed, 'God in heaven; there is a vessel in the roost.'

Mertoun looked to the north-westward, and an object was visible amid the rolling tide. 'She shows no sail,' he observed; and immediately added, after looking at the object through his spy-glass, 'she is dismasted, and lies a sheer hulk upon the water.'

'And is drifting on the Sumburgh-head,' said Mordaunt, struck with horror, 'without the slightest means of weathering the cape.'

'She makes no effort,' replied the father; 'she is probably deserted by her crew.'

'And in such a day as yesterday,' replied Mordaunt, 'when no open boat could live, were she manned with the best men ever handled an oar—all must have perished' (vol. i. p. 160–162).

Onward it came, the large black hulk seeming larger at every fathom's length. She came nearer, until she bestrode the summit of one tremendous billow, which rolled on with her unbroken, till the wave and its burthen were precipitated against the rock, and then the triumph of the elements over the work of human hands was at once completed. One wave, we have said, made the wrecked vessel completely manifest in her whole bulk, as it raised her, and bore her onward against the face of the precipice. But when that wave receded from the foot of the rock, the ship had ceased to exist; and the retiring billow only bore back a quantity of beams, planks, casks, and similar objects, which swept out to the offing, to be brought in again by the next wave, and again precipitated upon the face of the rock.

It was at this moment that Mordaunt conceived that he saw a man floating on a plank or water cask, which, drifting away from the main current, seemed about to go ashore upon a small spot of sand, where the water was shallow, and the waves broke more smoothly (vol. i. p. 163–165).

Mordaunt, at great risk, rescues the shipwrecked man; and, by the powerful intervention of Norna, succeeds in placing him, with some of his baggage unplundered, at the cottage of the Ranzelman, or petty magistrate of the hamlet. A scene has, in the meantime, been passing, which is painted in our author's happiest manner.

The love of fortuitous gain, which seems one of the strongest passions of uncultivated human nature—which gives zest to the pursuits of the sportsman and the gambler—which makes the soldier prize booty above pay—which caused the feudal monarch or his delegate to bestow so disproportionate an attention on treasure-trove and wreck, and royal fish and heriots, and other casual sources of revenue, and forces poor Swertha, Mertoun's housekeeper, to exclaim that 'a ship a-shore is a sight to wile the minister out of his very pu'pit in the middle of his preaching'—this universal passion has poured the whole village upon the beach, in earnest unscrupulous plunder of the wreck.

In the evening Mordaunt visits the stranger, whom he finds a tall and well-made man, with a bold sun-burnt handsome countenance, and manners that, in addition to the characteristic openness of a sailor, have an affectation of bluntness, a sort of defiance, uncalled for by his situation. He describes himself as Clement Cleveland, captain and part owner of the shipwrecked vessel, and departs the next morning for Burgh Westra, with an introduction from Mordaunt, in the hope of regaining a part of his plundered property, through the assistance of Magnus Troil. The story is now undramatic for a couple of months, during which a mutual attachment arises between Minna and Cleveland, whom Zetland hospitality had made an inmate at Burgh Westra, and both Cleveland and Troil are disposed to quarrel with Mordaunt—Cleveland, because Norna has informed him that she

destines Minna for Mordaunt; Troil, because he has received from a pedlar, and from the gossips of the island, false rumours, that Mordaunt had spoken disrespectfully and presumptuously of his intimacy with the sisters. The great Zetland festival of the eve of St. John assembles, however, the whole *dramatis personæ* under the hospitable roof of Magnus Troil.

The mighty feast, and the joyous dance, pass before us with the vividness of our author's drama. At the close of the latter, Brenda, in obedience to the commands of Norna, contrives an interview with Mordaunt—so delightfully managed that we can scarcely refrain from extracting it—in which he has an opportunity of hearing, and indignantly denying, the expressions attributed to him. Brenda's object is, to express her fears of Cleveland's influence over Minna; to entreat Mordaunt to avoid any strife with him, but to watch him, and, if possible, discover who he is, and what are his intentions; and to believe that, though her father and sister may appear altered, though she too must wear a face of cold friendship, at heart they are still Brenda and Mordaunt.

She stretched her hand to him, but withdrew it in some slight confusion, laughing and blushing when, by a natural impulse, he was about to press it to his lips. He endeavoured for a moment to detain her, for the interview had for him a degree of fascination which, as often as he had formerly been alone with Brenda, he had never experienced. But she extricated herself from him, and again signing an adieu, and pointing out to him a path different from that which she was herself about to take, tripped towards the house, and was soon hidden from his view by the acclivity.

The effect of this scene on Mordaunt appears to us admirably imagined. Incredulous as we are in love at first sight, thinking it always to require previous acquaintance, and almost intimacy, as a predisposing cause, we believe its actual explosion to be, in general, as trifling as to its immediate cause, and as complete in its effects, as it is described in the instance before us. That Mordaunt would become attached to one of the sisters was a matter of certainty; to which of the two, was a matter of chance; and a chance which circumstances, even slighter than those of which we have given the outline, might have determined. Our author has, with his usual skill, rather left us to infer the history of Brenda's affection, than actually related it. It appears to have been first roused from the slumber in which it lay, unperceived even by herself, while Mordaunt was living in undistinguishing intimacy with both the sisters, by her father's attempt to break off that intimacy. It is strengthened by the harshness with which he is treated by Minna, and by the attachment which arises between Minna and Cleveland; the first accustoming her to sympathise with Mordaunt as injured, the second making a friend and lover doubly interesting to her, to alleviate the loss of her sister's confidence, and the mortification which female vanity, even in the simplest mind, must have felt at a decided preference of another to her, when shown by such a man as Cleveland. Under these circumstances, we think our author perfectly justified in leading us, as he does in a beautiful scene between the sisters, to which we are not

yet arrived, to conclude that this interview was as decisive of Brenda's feelings as of Mordaunt's, and that it 'at once transformed them both from friends into lovers.'

The conversation of the sisters, as they are dressing the next morning, which, after some hints and recriminations, and cautions and disclaimers, ends in a demi-confidence on the part of Brenda, and a full one on that of Minna, is one of the most exquisite scenes in the novel. Its truth, delicacy, and ease are inimitable. We cannot bestow the same praise on that which follows, in which Norna in a half-serious pastime enshrines herself in a bearskin tabernacle, and returns oracular answers to the questions addressed to her. She prognosticates to Brenda a fortunate marriage; to Minna, a disastrous passion. As our author in this incident indulged at once his favourite propensities, of describing an obsolete custom, and prophetically indicating the subsequent events of his fable, it was not, perhaps, possible, with his weak powers of self-restraint, that he should omit it. But it is an unfortunate blemish. The prediction, as to Brenda, is a wanton injury to the interest of the story. Its only effect is to tell us, what it is the great business and great difficulty of the novel to conceal, that she and Mordaunt will escape all their dangers, and be happily united. If we were right in the distinction between tragedy and comedy which we endeavoured to explain in our remarks on the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' Minna's fate, being tragical, might have been foretold, but not by Norna, who was at that time planning for her, and, from her

confidence in her own powers, must have believed that she had secured a totally opposite destiny. And as the prediction is far too definite and too terrible to have been meant as a mere warning, we cannot conceive on what ground Norna can be supposed to have uttered it. It breaks up the sport, and Troil and his guests hasten to the beach, to watch the boats starting on the first day of the season, for the deep-sea fishery.

The bustle and animation of this description well introduce the scene by which it is followed,—one of those long conversations which form the principal beauty of most of our author's works, and almost the only one of this before us. The place is the beach of a retired cove, with a tranquil sea on one side, and caverned cliffs on the others. The speakers are Minna and Cleveland, who are forced, apparently for the first time, to look steadily at the difficulties of their situation. It is now that Cleveland assumes the designation of Pirate, a name which he is described, with perfect adherence to nature, as having hitherto avoided, while admitting the actions that entitled him to it, and that he addresses to Minna the question, so often put by the suitor of an heiress, and so seldom satisfactorily replied to, 'What will your father say?'— Her answers are delightfully descriptive of her character —of the credulous simplicity and sober vanity which our author has slily mixed with her talents, her strong feelings, and high-minded enthusiasm, and which were the natural results of those talents and feelings unenlightened by experience, and put to the test of no rivalry

or opposition. She proposes that he should merit her by assisting the Zetlanders in taking advantage of the British disturbances, and reasserting their independence. 'What is there,' she asks, 'to prevent all this?' In spite of his love, Cleveland's sense of humour is irresistibly tickled. 'Nothing *will* prevent it,' he replies, 'for it will never be attempted; anything *might* prevent it that is equal in strength to the long boat of an English man of war.' After a burst of indignant touchiness from the lady, he ventures to hint that:—

There are lands in which the eye may look bright upon groves of the palm and the cocoa, and where the foot may move lightly as a galley under sail, over fields carpeted with flowers, and savannahs surrounded by aromatic thickets, and where subjection is unknown, except that of the brave to the bravest, and of all to the most beautiful.

Minna's answer, though turning too exclusively on natural objects, is too beautiful to be omitted:—

No, Cleveland; my own rude country has charms for me, even desolate as you think it, and depressed as it surely is, which no other land on earth can present to me. I endeavour in vain to represent to myself those visions of trees and of groves, which my eye never saw; but my imagination can conceive no sight in nature more sublime than those waves, when agitated by a storm, or more beautiful than when they come, as they now do, rolling in calm tranquillity to the shore. Not the fairest scene in a foreign land—not the brightest sun-beam that ever shone upon the richest landscape, would win my thoughts for a moment from that lofty rock, misty hill, and wide-rolling ocean. Hialtland is the land of my deceased ancestors, and of my living father; and in Hialtland will I live and die.

To his proposal to live and die with her in Zetland, she objects the impossibility of her father's consent to her

union with an unknown stranger; and at last suggests that he should rejoin his associates, prosecute with them what she thinks a justifiable war against the cruel Spaniards, and oppressive English, and return to claim her hand, the leader of a gallant fleet. In the discussion of this scheme, he is led into details of his own past history, and that of his buccaneering companions, inconsistent with Minna's preconceived notions of the independent warriors of the western ocean, of the successors of the sons of the north, whose long gallies avenged, on so many coasts, the oppressions of degenerate Rome; and she is so much shocked as to conclude, almost abruptly, the interview.

We feel with pain that we have given a very poor and incorrect outline of this exquisite scene; but the topics are so numerous, the transitions so easy, the different subjects are so often taken up, laid down, and resumed, sometimes shown in one light, and sometimes in another; in short, it so perfectly resembles real conversation, that it is impossible to put it into an abridged or a connected shape.

The catastrophe is now at hand. It begins by a series of discoveries; that the real name of Norna is Troil, and that of Basil, Mertoun, and of Cleveland, Vaughan; that Basil was the early seducer of Norna, and that Cleveland is their son; that Cleveland and his father, while they both exercised piracy in the West Indies about eight years before, had at about the same time received an account of each other's death, and had been prevented from detecting its falsehood by each changing, at about the same time, his

name. It appears, too, that Basil Vaughan, having also heard a report of his mistress's death, had never enquired into the particulars of her fate when he returned to Zetland; and, though Norna was the most marked person in the island, and the especial protectress of his son Mordaunt, had never heard, what must have been notorious to everybody else in the island, and was so even to the provost of Kirkwall, that she had borne the name of Troil. The effect of all this is, to drive Basil into a foreign convent, and make Norna abdicate her elemental kingdom, and die penitent and devout. Cleveland, in return for some acts of generosity while a pirate, is pardoned, received into the British navy, and falls in action. Minna dies an old maid; Brenda and Mordaunt are married, and Magnus Troil enjoys a jovial old age.

Such is the fable—full of interest, activity, confusion, negligence, and improbability. The gentlest, the most confiding reader must be startled at the triple recognition, at the recurrence, in three distinct instances, of the same combination of events, a combination as unusual in real life, as it is trite in fiction. And he must be gentler still who can believe in the probability of Cleveland's pardon, or in the possibility of his reception into the British navy.

Among the characters, our favourite is Magnus Troil. He is drawn with such vigour and consistency; the broad features of his natural disposition are so well marked, and the peculiarities which modify them are so well accounted for, they smack so much of his soil and culture, and are so

incapable of being transferred to any other person, or any other situation, that he dwells in our recollection as more than an imaginary acquaintance. His hereditary rank and wealth, and his neglected education among inferiors or dependents, exclude both the virtues and the vices which a more varied social intercourse, a collision with equals, and rivals, and superiors, must have produced. His disposition has not been soured by neglect or injustice, his vanity stimulated by contest, his liberality confined by the necessity of saving, his selfishness rendered intense by the pursuit of personal aggrandisement, or his feelings blunted by habits of frequently subduing and, still more frequently, concealing them; while the same circumstances have deprived him of control over his temper, have left his prejudices unenlightened, and driven him for amusement to sensual excitement or promiscuous hospitality. He is, as we observed when he first was mentioned, a Zetlandish variation of Cedric, though with more shrewdness and practical sense, and less exaggeration, than our author chose to infuse into that worthy, but somewhat absurd, Thane. We wish, however, that his rupture with Mordaunt had been better accounted for. Our author himself has made the slightness of its grounds more striking by long delaying to explain them, a delay which we are inclined to attribute, either to his not having decided what they should be, or to his feeling ashamed of their inadequacy. The honest frank-hearted Udaller would never have cast off his 'good young friend' in sulky silence, on the reports of the pedlar, a liar by profession,

even aided by the tattle of Lady Glowrowrum. Their reconciliation is effected as clumsily, and slurred over as timidly.

Minna and Brenda are the sisters of Flora Mac Ivor and Rose Bradwardine, with the

> ——facies non una,
> Nec diversa tamen,

which has long been appropriated to that relationship. Minna has all Flora's high-blooded courage, and enthusiasm, and generosity, unchecked and uninformed by her experience and literature, by her knowledge of books and of the world. Brenda differs less from Rose in accidental features, and more in natural ones. Her education has been nearly the same, but her spirits are higher, her talents weaker, and her feelings less susceptible. She defends her lover boldly and vehemently, but she required strong circumstances to direct her attachment to him, and she is ready to sacrifice him, even while undertaking his defence, if Minna will give up Cleveland. When Flora ridicules Waverley, Rose is silent—but she had given him her affection, she had gone through fatigue and danger to protect him, while he was the avowed lover of another. An alteration in external circumstances alone would have identified the two former: if Flora had been a Zetlander, she would have been Minna. But an alteration in mind would be necessary to make Brenda coincide with Rose. We do not recollect a stronger instance of our author's talents, of the clearness with which his characters are conceived, and the consistency with which they are developed,

than the points of resemblance and dissimilarity in these four exquisite portraits. In ordinary hands they would have been exact imitations of each other, or totally unlike.

Norna is a more palpable copy than any of the preceding characters. She is not, like them, the representative of a class whose existence we might have conjectured *à priori*, but belongs to a race of beings common enough, and more than enough, in our author's pages, but who probably never were, and never will be, found anywhere else. They are all tall mysterious females, addicted to declamation and gifted with ubiquity, with strong talents and passions and disordered imaginations, and without the hopes, or fears, or sympathies of ordinary mortals; who forward the catastrophe by totally different means, and on totally different motives, from those of the other agents in the fable. The first and the best (if we must exclude the Lady of Branxolm Tower) was Meg Merrilies, and even she touched the borders of nature; and all her successors, down to Magdalen Græme, have gone farther and farther in transgressing them. But hitherto they have had a method in their madness—their features have been exaggerated, but they have been imposing and consistent, Norna is a perfect busy-body, and wastes her energy in restlessness and an affectation of activity as undignified and fidgetty as that of the Weird Sisters. She seems continually exclaiming—

I'll do, and I'll do, and I'll do.

She hides money under Yellowley's hearth, that she may

hoax him with imaginary wealth, of which her pet dwarf is to deprive him; intrudes into his house to frighten him and show off her power over the winds; breaks in upon the convivial party, and deranges their game of conjuration, in order to alarm them by her prophecies; and plays fifty such charlatan tricks, with no adequate purpose. All this would have done if the character had been avowedly burlesque, but it is intended to be lofty and dignified. She may please our translantic brethren, for they have an expression which seems made for her, she is 'awfully smart;' but we fear she will be understood by no one to whom the combination of ideas contained in that singular phrase is not familiar.

Cleveland appears to have won prodigiously on our author during the progress of the story, and we do not recollect a stronger instance of the ill effects of parental fondness. His feelings and his conduct on his first appearance are perfectly consistent with his previous history. His miraculous escape impresses him with no awe, the loss of his companions and friends with no regret or compassion. 'The dogs had their pay, and I can afford to pardon them. The boats swamped in the current—all were lost —and here am I,' is his only remark. If he feels any gratitude towards his preserver, it turns, as in a heart of the very worst description it naturally would, to malignant aversion the instant he thinks that he stands in his way. The obligation is a bridle to his resentment against his unconscious rival; but in his impatience of the restraint, 'he could gnaw the curb until his lips were bloody.' His

hatred is so vehement that it survives its cause; and he is forced to attribute it to natural dislike, to a principle of instinctive antipathy. He repays the frank hospitality of Magnus Troil, and the unsuspicious confidence of his daughter, by endeavouring to persuade Minna to elope with him to his piratical haunts in the West Indies. Until he quits Burgh Westra, he is what we know that a pirate must be—hard-hearted, selfish, ungrateful, and ferocious.

And we cannot but suspect that, up to this period, our author had reserved for him a pirate's fate; that he had intended him to adorn the yard-arm, or to display in a court of justice the audacity of his prototype Gow, or to succeed in his threat of 'snapping a pistol in the powder room.' That he should live honourably and die gallantly must, we think, have been an afterthought, for it is only by such a sudden alteration of his destiny, that we can account for his sudden alteration in disposition and conduct. He now feels that 'to avail himself of the enthusiastic error of Minna, would outglare and outweigh all his former sins, were they doubled in weight and in dye.' He feels remorse for having 'turned his follower Bunce from a stroller by land to a rover by sea;' surrenders to Mordaunt instead of making his escape, with no apparent motive but to atone for his crimes, and bids farewell to Minna, with an acknowledgment of the honour and mercy of his judges, and the hope of being useful to his country. Such are the inconsistencies, the lame and impotent conclusions, into which a writer, with even our author's powers, may be betrayed by haste.

We need add little to the remarks which we have incidentally applied to the remaining characters. Mordaunt is as insipid, and Yellowley and Halcro are as tiresome, as might be anticipated from their respective parts of hero and bore. The pirates are bold and vigorous sketches, and the adherence of the younger part of the crew to Cleveland, and of the weatherbeaten veterans to Goff, notwithstanding his propensity to be 'damned funny,' and run the ship ashore, or shoot his friends under the table, by way of frolic, is happily imagined.

The poetry is below our author's standard: Halcro's address to Bet Stimbister, and the song of the Pirates as they bear off Cleveland, 'Fire on the main-top,' &c. are perhaps the best specimens. The latter, short as it is, has infinite spirit. You fancy you hear its triumphant chorus as they bend to their oars. It is a spark of fire carelessly struck out by a powerful hand—the same perhaps that gave words to the bold Pibroch of Donuil Dhu.

The whole reading world has been for the last eight years employed in criticising the 'Waverley Novels,' and we think the judgment of our contemporaries, where it is the result of so much discussion, entitled to a great part of the weight which is usually confined to that of posterity. As we attribute so much to the public voice, we have been anxious to collect its suffrages and on many points we find them nearly uniform. It seems to be generally admitted that the author's characters are

superior to his plots; his humble, to his higher life; his Scotland, to his England; his tragedy, to his comedy; and, in general, his earlier, to his later works. While we have only to concur in these opinions, the task of criticism is easy and safe; but we own we have been puzzled when we have heard the same quality brought forward as matter of praise and of blame; when we have heard *mannerism* attributed by some to him as a fault, and expressions, which are really circumlocutions for it, 'that it is impossible to mistake his hand,' 'that you may at once tell that all his works are from the same master,' employed as terms of high commendation.

Such contradictions lead us to suspect an ambiguity in the word: and we believe that under Mannerism two very different characteristics are included. A writer of fiction may deserve the name of a mannerist, either by a continual selection of peculiar persons or situations for imitation, or by constantly attributing to his characters, whether taken at hazard or from a limited class, in given situations, peculiar feelings and modes of conduct. Thus a painter may be a mannerist, either if he choose to paint nothing but rocks or ships, or again if, taking his subjects from the common storehouse of nature, he dress them all in one or two uniform tints. The hunting pieces of Snyders and the candlelight figures of Schalchen do not differ from the representations of similar subjects by other masters; but they are both called mannerists because they copied no other objects. On the other hand, the landscapes of Gaspar, and the figures of Nicholas Poussin are

taken from a variety of subjects; but the green medium through which the former, and the red through which the latter, seems to have looked upon nature, though their selection of subjects was free from mannerism, have stamped with it their execution. When Marivaux selects for imitation, almost exclusively, the workings of vanity in the female heart, he is a mannerist of the first class. When he represents love as, in all cases, an instantaneous and irresistible affection, and makes all his heroes and all his heroines catch it on the first exchange of glances, with as little interference of the mind as if it were a mere bodily disorder, he belongs to the second. So if a poet choose to represent nothing but pirates and renegades, but give them the characteristics to which we are accustomed, he is a mannerist only in his subjects. If he dress them out with honour, constancy, magnanimity, and every virtue and refinement which other writers have avoided as inconsistent with their situation, he becomes likewise a mannerist in his mode of treating them.

It is true that, in such a case, most readers would forget the mannerism while dwelling on the inconsistency; but whether we believe such a representation to be correct or absurd—whether we believe pirates and renegades to be magnanimous and refined ascetics, or to be treacherous, cruel, and brutish sensualists—we must admit that the poet who describes them such as they never were described before, is a mannerist. The test will always be, the character and situation being given,—does the author's representation differ from that which might have

been expected from any other writer? If it do, he is a mannerist of the second class; if it do not, his mannerism, if any, is of the first kind.

Mannerism of the first kind will be diffused over the whole work, but can be faulty only from its excess. We were told long ago by high authority, that 'to be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little—to be acquainted with all the modes of life—to be able to estimate the happiness and misery of every condition—to observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations—and to trace all the changes of the human mind, as they are modified by various institutions and by accidental influences of climate or custom,' is a task too mighty for a single mind. The knowledge of every individual must be confined within limits which, however extensive, inclose but a small portion of the whole field open to poetical imitation. Within these limits a prudent author will confine himself; his only caution must be, to avoid that degree of self-resemblance which would deaden the reader's interest, by re-exhibiting to him characters with which he has already been made familiar, or events following one another in the same train, and therefore capable, when their sequence has once been discovered, of being anticipated.

Mannerism of the second kind must be partial, for no writer ever differed from all other writers in his whole representation of every character, in every scene; but, where it does occur, it will generally be faulty. The whole body of poets or of painters is always more likely to be right

than an individual: and, though there are doubtless splendid exceptions, it will usually be found that the portraits which differ from all other copies of the same originals, differ through their incorrectness.

From this kind of mannerism our author is in general free; though perhaps it is to be found in the powers of conversation and rhetoric with which he invests his young and inexperienced characters. He gives us, in defiance of the classical proverb, born orators: and they are equally independent of education. 'He is not for making slavish distinctions, and giving all the fine language to the upper sort of people.' The illiterate Halbert Glendinning and his rustic attendant, as they ascend the valley of Glendearg, theorise on the effects produced on our language and thoughts by those with whom we converse, with a metaphysical acuteness that would appear almost pedantic in ordinary society.

But of the mannerism which consists in the selection of peculiar persons and situations for imitation, that is, in the choice of his characters and the management of his plots, he is more guilty than most of his companions. All his readers must have observed the three characters that form the prominent group of almost every novel. A virtuous passive hero, who is to marry the heroine; a fierce active hero, who is to die a violent death, generally by being hanged or shot; and a fool or bore, whose duty it is to drain to the uttermost dregs one solitary fund of humour.

The 'Abbot,' we believe is the only one of the novels

from which all three are absent; but, among the others, the 'Antiquary' alone wants the fierce hero: the passive hero is deficient only in the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' and in 'Kenilworth' alone do we escape the bore—an escape for which we pay dearly in the 'Pirate.' It is, perhaps, an objection to this arrangement, so far as the heroes are concerned, that it is too obvious an imitation of Sir Walter Scott. We are always reminded of the similarly contrasted pair that support the plot of almost all his poems—of his 'Cranstoun' and 'Deloraine,' 'De Wilton' and 'Marmion,' 'Malcolm Græme' and 'Roderick Dhu,' and 'Redmond' and 'Bertram.' On the other hand, the family likeness of the persons singularly facilitates the adaptation of both the novels and poems to the stage. A performer who has acted in one of them has prepared himself for a whole line of characters. When Mrs. Egerton had studied Meg Merrilies, she was ready for Helen M'Gregor, Norna Troil, the Lady of Branxholm, and half a dozen sisters more. And we suppose that a manager who has once well cast 'Guy Mannering,' feels that he has the scaffolding up for the representation of any piece founded on any novel or romance, written or to be written, by the 'Author of Waverley.'

The only other instance, for which we have room, must be taken from his plots. The dangers to which writers of fiction in general expose their characters, arise from physical causes, or from the personal hostility of individuals. They are attacked by robbers or assassins, challenged by rivals, exposed to the hazards of battle, or to

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moving accidents by flood or fire. One source of danger only, and that the most common in real life, they usually avoid: they seldom venture to bring their heroes into collision with the law — to expose them to judicial trial or punishment; partly, perhaps, from the degrading associations connected with such a danger, and partly because it is one from which they can seldom be extricated by their own courage and exertions. But the expedient so generally avoided by his rivals, is our author's constant resource. Like the French revolutionists he has placed the scaffold at the end of all his vistas. It terminates the career of his active, and occasions the hazards of his passive, hero. And in the earlier part of the narrative, where he cannot be suspected of any serious designs against his principal character, his favourite amusement is to heap upon him suspicious appearances, to give the details of an examination, and to exhibit the subtilty with which even an honest magistrate may be led to warp facts in support of an opinion originally unfavourable, and the dangers to which innocence may be exposed by the combinations of circumstantial evidence.

These peculiarities, as might be expected, are in full force in his first work. Everybody there is hanged, or on the point of being hanged: and, in addition to the dangers incurred by the hero in the actual commission of treason, he is pursued through the two first volumes by false accusations. Dirk Hatteraick avoids receiving from others the fate of Fergus Mac Ivor only by *inflicting* it on himself. And in Bertram's examination before Sir Robert Hazle-

wood, and the plausible appearances of guilt in which he is involved, every reader must have recollected the interview between Waverley and Major Melville. Lovel's flight for the supposed murder of M'Intyre, and the commitment of Ochiltree for the theft of the pocket-book, are the corresponding scenes of the 'Antiquary;' wanting the fierce hero, it wants also an execution. In the 'Black Dwarf,' it is by threat of legal evils that Sir Frederick Langley prevails on Ellieslaw and Isabella; and by the power with which the law has armed him, that Earnscliff is ultimately successful. In the tale of 'Old Mortality,' death, by the sentence of a military or a civil tribunal, is ever before our eyes. And again, like Morton, Rob Roy is brought out pinioned for execution. In the same novel, the feeble accusation of Francis Osbaldistone, as to the robbery of Morris, shows how our author clings to this expedient, however unfavourable the occasion.

We might have expected him to be satisfied with the legitimate scope which the 'Heart of Midlothian' afforded to his legal propensities; but even there he has brought in the suspicions thrown upon Butler, and his examination before Mr. Middleburgh, which form, in fact, a useless episode, merely, as far as we can perceive, because he cannot resist the temptation of painting such scenes, if he can find any excuse for their introduction. Law, first in the shape of impending punishment, and afterwards in that of process, is again mingled with all the terrors of the 'Bride of Lammermoor;' and even among the wild landscape figures of the 'Legend of Montrose,' the most formidable

scene of danger is Dalgetty's escape from the jurisdiction of Argyle, and his high gallows and short shrift.

The form, but not the substance, is changed in 'Ivanhoe'—witchcraft, the judicial combat, and the stake, are substituted for felony, a jury, and the gibbet; and Bois Guilbert falls under the judgment of God, instead of that of his peers. If any of our author's works could have been privileged from the intrusion of law, it probably would have been the 'Monastery,' for who ever before saw law mixed with the machinery of a fairy tale? But it continues the mainspring of the action, which takes rise from Sir Piercy's retreat to Scotland to avoid legal punishment for his intrigues against Elizabeth, and from the mutual flight of him and of Halbert Glendinning, to avoid the legal consequences of the murder, of which the one is believed by others, and the other thinks himself, to be guilty. Though less obtrusive, legal punishment is the ultimate source of the dangers in the 'Abbot.' When we tremble at the risks of Mary's escape, our real cause of fear is the vengeance which, in case of detection, awaits, under the forms of law, both her and her associate. Again, it is the enquiry, not strictly legal, but certainly judicial, to be held by Elizabeth on Amy's marriage, that knits together the plot of 'Kenilworth;' and Varney, like Dirk Hatteraick, avoids hanging only by suicide. And to conclude an enumeration which, from the very uniformity which it is meant to prove, must have become tedious, it is the great fault of our author's last work, that the judicial

noose, which is kept dangling over the heads of the Pirates from the beginning of the work, does not, at the conclusion, suspend them all.

Our author has not deserted, in the 'FORTUNES OF NIGEL,' a practice recommended to him by so long an experience. An active hero, and a passive hero, are, as usual, the prominent figures. A lawsuit is the basis of the plot. The poor passive hero is buffeted about in the usual manner, involved, as usual, in the chicaneries of civil process, and exposed to the danger of a criminal execution, and rewarded by the hand of the heroine, such as she is, and by the redemption of the mortgage on his family estate. The active hero runs his usual career of fierceness and pettifogging, and is, as usual, killed when no longer wanted. But we must proceed to further details—for the outline which we have given would suit a dozen of our author's novels as well as that before us.

The scene is laid in London, just before the termination of the reign of James the First. It opens, on a fine April evening, in the shop of David Ramsay, a watchmaker, in Fleet-street, a few yards to the eastward of St. Dunstan's church. The old and abstracted mechanic, his apprentices, Jenkin Vincent, or Jin Vin, and Tunstall, and the mode of carrying on business by the oral advertisement to passengers of 'What d'ye lack? What d'ye lack? clocks, watches, barnacles,—barnacles, watches, clocks'—are set before us with our author's vivid distinctness. A scuffle is heard in the street, and while

the apprentices have run out to join it, their master receives a visit from his intimate friend, the benevolent George Heriot, then a goldsmith in Lombard-street. The victim of the fray, a wounded Scotchman, is soon brought in, and a cross-examination by Heriot proves him to be Richard Moniplies, the servant of the passive hero, Lord Glenvarloch.

The next morning finds Nigel Olifant, the young Lord Glenvarloch, in his little apartment, in the mansion of John Christie, a shipchandler, in Paul's wharf. His hostess, Dame Nelly—a round, buxom, laughter-loving dame, with black eyes, a tight well-laced bodice, a green apron, and a red petticoat edged with a slight silver lace, and judiciously shortened to show that a light clean ancle rests upon her well-burnished shoe — is endeavouring to account for his servant's absence, when Moniplies himself enters, having spent the night, after leaving Ramsay's shop, in vain attempts to discover Paul's wharf. He is soon followed by Heriot, an old friend of the late Lord Glenvarloch, and the basis of the plot is now skilfully developed in conversation. It appears that Lord Glenvarloch is a creditor of the crown for a very considerable sum advanced by his father to King James — and that his own paternal estate of Glenvarloch is mortgaged for 40,000 marks due ostensibly to one Peregrine Peterson. The nature of this mortgage is so obscure that we give it in our author's own words :—

'I know nothing of a mortgage,' said the young lord; 'but there is a wadset for such a sum, which, if unredeemed, will

occasion the forfeiture of my whole paternal estate, for a sum not above a fourth of its value—and it is for that very reason that I press the King's government for a settlement of the debts due to my father, that I may be able to redeem my land from this rapacious creditor.'

'A wadset in Scotland,' said Heriot, 'is the same with a mortgage on this side of the Tweed; but you are not acquainted with your real creditor. The Conservator Peterson only lends his name to shroud no less a man than the Lord Chancellor of Scotland, who hopes, under cover of his debt, to gain possession of the estate himself, or perhaps to gratify a yet more powerful third party. He will probably suffer his creature Peterson to take possession, and when the odium of the transaction shall be forgotten, the property and lordship of Glenvarloch will be conveyed to the great man by his obsequious instrument, under cover of a sale, or some similar device' (vol. i. p. 99, 100).

The interview ends by George Heriot's inviting the Earl to dine with him at noon the next day, and undertaking to present to the King a petition on his behalf for the payment of his claim on the treasury. The good citizen's ride for that purpose from St. Paul's to the palace at Whitehall, his two visits by the way, to G. Ramsay, to invite him and his daughter to join the dinner party the next day, and to Andrew Skurliewhitter a scrivener, who engrosses the petition, and his reception at Whitehall, are sketched with masterly ease and probability.

The scene of confusion amid which he found the King seated, was no bad picture of the state and quality of James's own mind. There was much that was rich and costly in cabinet pictures and valuable ornaments, but they were slovenly arranged, covered with dust, and lost half their value, or at least their effect, from the manner in which they were presented to the eye. The table

was loaded with huge folios, amongst which lay light books of jest and ribaldry; and amongst notes of unmercifully long orations, and essays on king-craft, were mingled miserable roundels and ballads by the royal 'prentice, as he styled himself, in the art of poetry, and schemes for the general pacification of Europe, with a list of the names of the King's hounds, and remedies against canine madness.

The King's dress was of green velvet, quilted so full as to be dagger-proof, which gave him the appearance of clumsy and ungainly protuberance; while its being buttoned awry communicated to his figure an air of distortion. Over his green doublet he wore a sad coloured night-gown, out of the pocket of which peeped his hunting-horn. His high-crowned grey hat lay on the floor, covered with dust, but encircled by a carkanet of large balas rubies; and he wore a blue velvet night-cap, in the front of which was placed the plume of a heron, which had been struck down by a favourite hawk in some critical moment of the flight, in remembrance of which the King wore this highly-honoured feather (vol. i. p. 124–126).

Such was the monarch, who, saluting Heriot familiarly by the name of Jingling Geordie (for it was his well-known custom to give nick-names to all his familiars), enquired what new clatter-traps he had brought with him to cheat his lawful and native Prince out of his siller (vol. i. p. 124–128).

By a manœuvre, which is perhaps a little too theatrical, Heriot places the petition in his hands; and after a little petulance, and some debtor-like shifts, easily baffled by the experienced citizen, the king promises *in verbo regis* that the young man shall have his siller.

The next scene is George Heriot's dinner, which appears to have been intended to introduce to the reader some characters whom he has often to meet again.

Mr. David Ramsay, that profound and ingenious mechanic, was safely conducted to Lombard-street, according to promise, well

washed, brushed, and cleaned from the soot of the furnace and the forge. His daughter came with him, a girl about twenty years old, very pretty, very demure, yet with lively black eyes, that ever and anon contradicted the expression of sobriety to which silence, reserve, a plain velvet hood and cambric ruff, had condemned Mistress Marget, as the daughter of a quiet citizen.

There were also two citizens and merchants of London, men ample in cloak and many-linked golden chain, well to pass in the world, and experienced in their craft of merchandise, who may be dismissed with brief notice; but not so Sir Mungo Malagrowther, of Girnigo Castle, who claims a little more attention, as an original character of the time in which he flourished (vol. i. p. 148).

We are sorry we cannot give Sir Mungo at full length. He is a man of birth and talents, but naturally unamiable and soured by misfortune, who now, mutilated by accident, and grown old, and deaf, and peevish, endeavours by the unsparing exercise of a malicious penetration and a caustic wit, under the protection of his bodily infirmities, to retaliate on an unfriendly world, and to reduce its happier inhabitants to a momentary level with himself. The dinner is ushered in by a rather exaggerated exhibition of Sir Mungo's peculiarities. He is silenced by a reply of George Heriot's, and the whole entertainment is then slurred over with a brief indistinctness. We are merely told that the dinner and the wines were excellent, that Nigel could extract nothing beyond monosyllabic replies and slight simpers from the watchmaker's pretty daughter, and that the old citizens and the goldsmith talked over commercial matters in technical phraseology.

This appears to us one of the least finished scenes of

the work. We expected the manners and the conversation of the city two centuries ago, but we have a mere description of a dinner which might have been given by any modern shopkeeper. It is impossible even to account for the time which it consumes. The guests arrive at twelve; soon after the dinner, which cannot be supposed to employ more than two hours, they separate and prayers follow. Nigel almost immediately departs, under the guidance of a link boy, which could not have been necessary before seven on an April evening. How has the time from noon been passed? We mention an inaccuracy, which may appear trifling, because we are sure that it is on the completeness of the details, upon a perfect consistency in times and places, that the illusion of fiction principally depends. It is this which gives such an appearance of veracity to Swift, and Defoe, and Richardson: and we should be sorry to see our author neglect to keep up a merit which he has as yet possessed in an extraordinary degree.

The next morning is employed in Nigel's presentation at court. In the ante-rooms he is recognised by Lord Huntinglen, once the enemy, and afterwards the friend of his father. Our author has invested Lord Huntinglen with the privilege which was really enjoyed by Sir D. Ramsay, of obtaining an annual boon from the king. As James's conduct seems to presage the failure of Lord Glenvarloch's petition, Lord Huntinglen descends, *e machinâ*, to ask as his boon for the year, that the king will make an instant decision, without reference to his council.

'To grant the truth,' he said, after he had finished his hasty perusal, 'this is a hard case; and harder than it was represented to me, though I had some inkling of it before. And so the lad only wants payment of the siller due from us, in order to reclaim his paternal estate? But then, Huntinglen, the lad will have other debts—and for what burthen himsell with sae mony acres of barren woodland? let the land gang, man, let the land gang; Steenie has the promise of it from our Scottish Chancellor—it is the best hunting ground in Scotland—and Baby Charles and Steenie want to kill a buck there this next year—they maun hae the land—they maun hae the land; and our debt shall be paid to the young man plack and baubee, and he may have the spending of it at our court; or if he has such an eard hunger, wouns! man, we'll stuff his stomach with English land, which is worth twice as much, ay, ten times as much, as these accursed hills and heughs, and mosses and muirs, that he is sae keen after.'

All this while the poor King ambled up and down the apartment in a piteous state of uncertainty, which was made more ridiculous by his shambling circular mode of managing his legs, and his ungainly fashion of fiddling on such occasions with the bunches of ribbands which fastened the lower part of his dress.

Lord Huntinglen listened with great composure, and answered, 'An it please your majesty, there was an answer yielded by Naboth when Ahab coveted his vineyard: "The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."'

'Ey, my lord—ey, my lord!' ejaculated James, while all the colour mounted both to his cheek and nose; 'I hope ye mean not to teach me divinity? Ye need not fear, my lord, that I will shun to do justice to every man; and, since your lordship will give me no help to take up this in a more peaceful manner—whilk, methinks, would be better for the young man, as I said before—why since it maun be so—'sdeath, I am a free king, man, and he shall have his money and redeem his land, and make a kirk and a miln of it, an he will.' So saying he hastily wrote an order on the Scottish Exchequer for the sum in question (vol. i. p. 248, 249).

Nigel, accompanied by Lord Huntinglen and G. Heriot, now leaves the palace, and they encounter on their way the Duke of Buckingham, who, as he passes on to the king, very unnecessarily insults the two latter, and informs Nigel that he is his enemy. Lord Huntinglen's house is now the scene of two important events. One is the introduction of Lord Dalgarno, Lord Huntinglen's son, a favourite of prince Charles and of Buckingham, and the active or villain hero of the tale; the other is the transfer to a customer of Heriot's of the mortgage on Lord Glenvarloch's estate.

The first event at Nigel's lodgings the next morning is a visit from Lord Dalgarno, who, after a conversation, filled on his own side with warm protestations of kindness, and an exhibition of fashionableness rather too flaunty to be characteristic of a high-born and high-bred courtier, induces, almost by force, his new friend to accompany him to an ordinary, an institution then new and fashionable, and serving at once the purposes of a table d'hôte and a gambling-house. The representation of the company, the host and the entertainment, deserves the high praise of being in our author's best manner. Our expectation rose high when we found our two friends proceed to see Burbage in Richard the Third, and that they were to sup at the Mermaid with two or three of the most accomplished wits and poets of the age: but our author seems to have been attacked by an unfortunate fit of indolence or timidity. He despatches the play in two sentences, and the supper in one; and tantalises us with a bare statement

of excited spirits and emulous wit, which we are not permitted to share. A similar disappointment followed. Nigel is presented to his friend's sister, Lady Blackchester, and spends, we are told, a lively day among the gay and the fair: but our author, with unaccustomed and ill-timed caution, shrinks from an exhibition of the high-born dames of King James's days, and introduces no British female of higher rank than the watchmaker's daughter.

The narrative, which has as yet been a journal, now for the first, and indeed the only, time, ceases to be so for several weeks, during which Lord Glenvarloch's life is thus described.

The ordinary was no bad introduction to the business of the day; and the young lord quickly found, that if the society there was not always irreproachable, still it formed the most convenient and agreeable place of meeting with the fashionable parties, with whom he visited Hyde Park, the theatres, and other places of public resort, or joined the gay and glittering circle which Lady Blackchester had assembled around her. Neither did he entertain the same scrupulous horror which led him originally even to hesitate entering into a place where gaming was permitted; but, on the contrary, began to indulge the idea, that as there could be no harm in beholding such recreation when only indulged in to a moderate degree, so, from a parity of reasoning, there could be no objection to joining in it, always under the same restrictions. But the young lord was a Scotsman, habituated to early reflection, and totally unaccustomed to any habit which inferred a careless risk or profuse waste of money. Profusion was not his natural vice, or one likely to be acquired in the course of his education; and in all probability, while his father anticipated with noble horror the idea of his son approaching the gaming-table, he was more startled at the idea of his becoming a gaining, than a losing adventurer. The second, according to his principles, had a termination, a sad one indeed, in

the loss of temporal fortune—the first quality went on increasing the evil which he dreaded, and perilled at once both body and soul.

However the old lord might ground his apprehension, it was so far verified by his son's conduct that from an observer of the various games of chance which he witnessed, he came by degrees, by moderate hazards, and small bets or wagers, to take a certain interest in them. Nor could it be denied that his rank and expectations entitled him to hazard a few pieces (for his game went no deeper) against persons who, from the readiness with which they staked their money, might be supposed well able to afford to lose it (vol. ii. p. 35).

We must add that he leaves Paul's Wharf, and fixes his residence near the temple. The first symptom of the effect of his present conduct on his reputation is a request from his servant, Moniplies, to be discharged.

'This chambering, diceing, and play-haunting,' says the honest, conceited, and pedantic Scotchman, 'is not my element—I cannot draw breath in it—and when I hear of your lordship winning the siller that some poor creature may full sairly miss—by my saul if it wad serve your necessity, rather than you gained it from him, I wad tak a jump over the hedge with your lordship, and cry "Stand!" to the first grazier we met that was coming from Smithfield with the price of his Essex calves in his leathern pouch!'

'You are a simpleton,' said Nigel, who felt, however, much conscience-struck; 'I never play but for small sums.'

'Ay, my lord,' replied the unyielding domestic, 'and—still with reverence—it is even sae much the waur. If you played with your equals, there might be like sin, but there wad be mair warldly honour in it. Your lordship kens, or may ken, by experience of your ain, whilk is not as yet mony weeks auld, that small sums can ill be missed by those that have nane larger; and I maun e'en be plain with you, that men notice it of your lordship, that ye play wi' nane but the misguided creatures that can but afford to lose bare stakes.'

'No man dare say so!' replied Nigel, very angrily. 'I play with whom I please, but I will only play for what stake I please.'

'That is just what they say, my lord,' said the unmerciful Richie, whose natural love of lecturing, as well as his bluntness of feeling, prevented him from having any idea of the pain which he was inflicting on his master; 'these are even their own very words.'

'And so, my lord, to speak it out, the lackies and the gallants, and more especially your sworn brother, Lord Dalgarno, call you the sparrow-hawk. I had some thought to have cracked Lutin's pate for the speech, but, after a', the controversy was not worth it.'

'Do they use such terms of me?' said Lord Nigel. 'Death and the devil!'

And the devil's dam, my lord,' answered Richie; 'they are all three busy in London — and besides, Lutin and his master laughed at you, my lord, for letting it be thought that — I shame to speak it — that ye were over well with the wife of the decent honest man whose house you have but now left, as not sufficient for your new bravery, whereas they said—the licentious scoffers!— that you pretended to such favour when you had not courage enough for so fair a quarrel, and that the sparrow-hawk was too craven-crested to fly at the wife of a cheesemonger' (vol. ii. p. 59).

Moniplies departs, and Nigel, to dissipate by exercise the uneasy reflections forced upon him, repairs to St. James's Park, and is instantly pounced upon by Sir Mungo Malagrowther. He hears again all that Moniplies had collected of painful and degrading reports, sharpened and aimed by the wit and malignity of his misanthropic countryman. The conversation is interrupted by the appearance of Prince Charles, accompanied by Buckingham and Dalgarno, and a splendid train, who sweep across our author's stage with the picturesque reality that belongs to his representations

of visible objects. A few words addressed by the Prince to Sir Mungo, and a frown cast on himself, convince Nigel how far and how high the misrepresentations of his character have extended, and on the separation of the prince's train he fastens on Lord Dalgarno to demand, in no very placable manner, an explanation. We must insert the termination of the spirited dialogue which follows.

'I will cut this matter short,' said Lord Dalgarno, with haughty coldness. 'You seem to have conceived, my lord, that you and I were Pylades and Orestes — a second edition of Damon and Pythias — Theseus and Pirithous at the least. You are mistaken, and have given the name of friendship to what, on my part, was mere good-nature and compassion for a raw and ignorant countryman, joined to the cumbersome charge which my father gave me respecting you. Your character, my lord, is of no one's drawing, but of your own making. I introduced you where, as in all such places, there was good and indifferent company to be met with—your habits, or taste, made you prefer the worse. Your holy horror at the sight of dice and cards degenerated into the cautious resolution to play only at those times, and with such persons as might ensure your rising a winner—no man can long do so, and continue to be held a gentleman. Such is the reputation you have made for yourself, and you have no right to be angry that I do not contradict what you yourself know to be true. Let us pass on, my lord; and if you want further explanation, seek some other time and fitter place.'

'No time can be better than the present,' said Lord Glenvarloch, whose resentment was now excited to the uttermost by the cold-blooded and insulting manner in which Dalgarno vindicated himself; 'no place fitter than the place where we now stand. Those of my house have ever avenged insult at the moment, and on the spot, where it was offered, were it at the foot of the throne.— Lord Dalgarno, you are a villain! draw and defend yourself.' At the same time he unsheathed his rapier.

'Are you mad?' said Lord Dalgarno, stepping back; 'we are in the precincts of the court.'

'The better,' answered Lord Glenvarloch; 'I will cleanse them from a calumniator and a coward.' He then pressed on Lord Dalgarno, and struck him with the flat of the sword.

The fray had now attracted attention, and the cry went round, 'Keep the peace — keep the peace — swords drawn in the Park—What, ho! guards! — keepers — yeoman rangers!' and a number of people came rushing to the spot from all sides.

Lord Dalgarno, who had half drawn his sword on receiving the blow, returned it to his scabbard when he observed the crowd thicken, and taking Sir Ewes Haldimund by the arm, walked hastily away, only saying to Lord Glenvarloch as they left him, 'You shall dearly abye this insult — we will meet again.'

A decent-looking elderly man, who observed that Lord Glenvarloch remained on the spot, taking compassion on his youthful appearance, said to him, 'Are you aware this is a Star-Chamber business, young gentleman, and that it may cost you your right hand? Shift for yourself before the keepers or constables come up. Get into Whitefriars or somewhere, for sanctuary and concealment, till you can make friends or quit the city' (vol. ii. pp. 100–103).

To Whitefriars accordingly, now a collection of warehouses and manufactories, lined by wharfs and bustling with industry, but then consisting of crowded and ill-built houses, privileged in most cases from the intrusion of legal authority, and therefore inhabited by those whose safety was inconsistent with the administration of the law, Lord Glenvarloch betakes himself, under the guidance of Reginald Lowestoffe, a young Templar, of the frank, thoughtless, bustling character which seems appropriated, in fiction at least, to his class. The remainder of this day, the whole of the next, and the following night, are spent

by the hero in Whitefriars, or Alsatia, as was then its cant name; and the scenes to which his residence gives rise are as powerful in conception and execution as they are, to us at least, disagreeable in their effect. They are pictures of avarice, sensuality, rapaciousness, falsehood, selfishness, cruelty and want; of all the lowest misery and debauchery of a capital; of objects which excite neither our sympathy nor our curiosity, and where the only merit is fidelity of resemblance—a merit which our want of familiarity with the originals makes us estimate very imperfectly.

We must pass rapidly over Nigel's reception into the freedom of Alsatia, and his establishment as a lodger in a large dilapidated house occupied by Trapbois, a superannuated usurer, and his daughter Martha, a new variation of our author's well-known class of tall, decisive, unsympathising and masculine females. He receives the next morning, from Lowestoffe, the casket containing his money and papers, the most important of which is the King's order in his favour on the Exchequer; and, after a day varied only by the intrusive visits of his associates in the sanctuary, retires to bed.

There was a slight fever on Nigel's blood, occasioned by the various events of the evening, which put him, as the phrase is, beside his rest. Perplexing and painful thoughts rolled on his mind like a troubled stream, and the more he laboured to lull himself to slumber, the farther he seemed from attaining his object. He tried all the resources common in such cases, kept counting from one to a thousand, until his head was giddy—he watched the embers of the wood fire till his eyes were dazzled—he listened to the dull moaning of the wind, the swinging and creaking of signs which projected from the houses, and the baying of here and there a homeless dog, till his very ear was weary.

Suddenly, however, amid this monotony, came a sound which startled him at once. It was a female shriek. He sate up in his bed to listen, then remembered he was in Alsatia, where brawls of every sort were current among the unruly inhabitants. But another scream, and another, and another succeeded so close, that he was certain, though the noise was remote and sounded stifled, it must be in the same house with himself.

Nigel jumped up hastily, put on a part of his clothes, seized his sword and pistols, and ran to the door of his chamber. Here he heard the screams redoubled, and, as he thought, the sounds came from the usurer's apartment. He bursts into it and finds Martha Trapbois struggling with two ruffians, who have already murdered her father; one of them he kills, the other flies (vol. ii. p. 331).

Among the crowd whom the noise of the conflict calls in, is a young man in the green plush jacket of a waterman, who informs Nigel, on the part of his friend Lowestoffe, that a warrant from the lord chief justice is out against him, and that a wherry will be at the Temple stairs early the next morning to take him out of its reach; and accordingly, as soon as grey or rather yellow light is beginning to twinkle through the fogs of Whitefriars, the hero embarks, accompanied by Martha Trapbois, who takes this opportunity to remove herself and her father's strong box from her dreadful residence. He lands Martha and her treasure at Paul's Wharf, with a recommendation to his old landlord John Christie, and as soon as they are off Greenwich, by an exertion of independent volition, quite solitary in his history, he forces the watermen to abandon their own scheme of taking him to a vessel bound for Scotland, and to land him at the palace. Determined to appeal to the

king himself for justice or mercy, he gains admittance into the park, and is fortunate enough to meet with James unattended, just at the conclusion of the chase. 'And wha may ye be, friend?' says the King, now finding leisure to take a nearer view of Nigel, after having received his assistance in breaking the deer.

And observing what in his first emotion of sylvan delight had escaped him: 'Ye are nane of our train, man. In the name of God, what the devil are ye?'

'An unfortunate man, sire,' replied Nigel.

'I dare say that,' answered the King snappishly, 'or I wad have seen naething of you. My lieges keep a' their happiness to themselves, but let bowls row wrang wi' them, and I am sure to hear of it.'

'And to whom else can we carry our complaints but to your Majesty, who is heaven's vicegerent over us?' answered Nigel.

'Right, man, right—very weel spoken,' said the king; 'but ye should leave heaven's vicegerent some quiet on earth, too.'

'If your Majesty will look on me,' (for hitherto the King had been so busy, first with the dogs, and then with the mystic operation of *breaking*, in vulgar phrase, cutting up the deer, that he had scarce given his assistant above a transient glance,) 'you will see whom necessity makes bold to avail himself of an opportunity which may never again occur.'

King James looked; his blood left his cheek, though it continued stained with that of the animal which lay at his feet; he dropped the knife from his hand, cast behind him a faltering eye, as if he either meditated flight or looked out for assistance, and them exclaimed,—'Glenvarlochides! as sure as I was christened James Stuart. Here is a bonny spot of work, and me alone, and on foot too!' he added, bustling to get upon his horse.

'Forgive me that I interrupt you, my liege,' said Nigel, placing himself between the King and the steed; 'hear me but a moment.'

'I'll hear ye best on horseback,' said the King. 'I canna hear a word on foot, man, not a word; and it is not seemly to stand

cheek-for-chowl confronting us that gate. Bide out of our gate, sir, we charge you, on your allegiance. The de'il's in them a', what can they be doing?'

'By the crown which you wear, my liege,' said Nigel, 'and for which my ancestors have worthily fought, I conjure you to be composed, and to hear me but a moment!'

That which he asked was entirely out of the Monarch's power to grant. The timidity which he showed was not the plain downright cowardice which, like a natural impulse, compels a man to flight, and which can excite little but pity or contempt, but a much more ludicrous, as well as more mingled sensation. The poor king was frightened at once and angry, desirous of securing his safety, and at the same time ashamed to compromise his dignity; so that, without attending to what Lord Glenvarloch endeavoured to explain, he kept making at his horse, and repeating, 'We are a free King, man—we are a free King—we will not be controlled by a subject. In the name of God, what keeps Steenie? And, praised be his name, they are coming—Hillo, ho—here, here—Steenie, Steenie!' (vol. iii. pp. 86–88).

The train of hunters gallop up, Nigel is roughly seized, and the discovery of pistols under his cloak convinces the timorous king of his treasonable intentions. He is dragged through the town, placed in a boat with a pursuivant and two yeomen of the guard, and rowed swiftly up the river.

They passed the groves of masts which even then astonished the stranger with the extended commerce of London, and now approached those low and blackened walls of curtain and bastion, which exhibit here and there a piece of ordnance, and here and there a solitary sentinel under arms, but have otherwise so little of the military terrors of a citadel. A projecting low-browed arch, which had loured o'er many an innocent, and many a guilty, head in similar circumstances, now spread its dark frowns over that of Nigel. The boat was put close up to the broad steps against which the tide was lapping its lazy wave. The warder on duty looked from the wicket, and spoke with the pursuivant in whispers. In

a few minutes the Lieutenant of the Tower appeared, received, and granted an acknowledgment for the body of Nigel, Lord Glenvarloch' (vol. iii. p. 102).

We have now reached the point at which the underplots bear on the main story, and must lead our readers back nearly to the spot from which they set out. We must inform them that Margaret Ramsay, the watchmaker's pretty daughter, notwithstanding her sense and his reserve; notwithstanding their difference in rank, greater then than even it would be now, though knowing nothing of him but that he was handsome and a lord, fell deeply in love with Lord Glenvarloch when he spent an hour or two in her company at George Heriot's formal dinner. What is, perhaps more extraordinary, she is instantly aware of the nature of her feelings, and the same evening makes a confidante of Dame Ursula Suddlechop, one of those bustling intriguantes of lower life whom our author generally employs to connect the broken threads of his story, to do whatever is below the dignity or beyond the power of his other agents, and to perform for him the services which his early predecessors in romance received from the fairy or the enchanter.

Through Dame Ursula, Margaret learns from time to time the progress of Glenvarloch's fortunes; by her assistance she transmits to him an anonymous note which warns him of his danger from Lord Dalgarno; and, when ruin seems coming upon him 'like an armed man,' she employs Ursula to contrive his escape from Whitefriars. The instrument whom Ursula selects for this purpose is Jenkin

Vincent, the watchmaker's apprentice, whom our author generally designates by the pet appellative of Jin Vin. But there are obstacles which seem to disqualify him. He had himself, after the manner of apprentices whose master has an only daughter, formed designs upon Miss Margaret; and Ursula, to whose counsels he had resorted, had dressed him in fine clothes, and sent him to the ordinary, where he was to learn the manners of the court, and win a fortune at gleek and primero, and gain his mistress's heart in his assumed character, as soon as he was 'perfect in his gallantries and as rich as the king.' Nigel, however, has crossed this hopeful scheme, by winning first Margaret's heart, and afterwards, Vincent's money; and the poor apprentice comes in great wrath to reproach Ursula with the consequence of her advice. In a long dialogue she soothes his anger, feeds his hopes, coaxes his vanity, and at length induces him to play the part of the green jacketed waterman in Nigel's escape.

While agents, of whom he scarcely knew the existence, were thus labouring for the hero—events, equally uninfluenced by him, had prepared the ruin of his enemy. Lord Dalgarno, while in Spain, about three years before the opening of the story, had seduced, by the trite experiment of a mock marriage, a Genoese lady of large fortune, called the Lady Hermione. After some very novel-like persecutions by inquisitors and lady-abbesses, she takes refuge with her deceased father's correspondent, G. Heriot, and on the morning of Nigel's adventure in Greenwich Park, she forwards to the king, by her attendant Monna Paula,

a petition containing a statement of her injuries. Margaret Ramsay, in boy's clothes, accompanies Monna Paula to the Palace, and in the alarm excited by Nigel's supposed attempt, she is seized as a stranger, and carried before the king. She manages to plead the cause of Nigel: and her beauty, the romance of her situation, and James's own self-satisfaction at the dexterity with which he has detected her disguise, assist the earnestness of her representations. This impression is aided by the proofs of Lord Dalgarno's villainy contained in the petition of the Lady Hermione; and the king resolves to ascertain his prisoner's guilt or innocence, by placing himself in a situation in which he can hear all that passes, and then exposing Nigel to the visits of those with whom his conversation was likely to be unguarded. Margaret Ramsay, in her boy's disguise, is first introduced as a fellow-prisoner. He is then visited by John Christie, who charges him with having seduced his wife—a crime of which Lord Dalgarno had in fact been guilty, but which Christie, aware how faintly he had denied an undue intimacy with her, very plausibly fixes on Nigel. Christie is followed by Heriot. As his business relates to the obscure affair of the mortgage, we must let our author explain it.

'You cannot have forgotten, my lord,' said Heriot; 'the transaction which took place some weeks since at Lord Huntinglen's, by which a large sum of money was advanced for the redemption of your lordship's estate?'

'I remember it perfectly,' said Nigel; 'and your present austerity cannot make me forget your kindness on the occasion.'

Heriot bowed gravely, and went on: 'That money was advanced

under the expectation and hope that it might be replaced by the contents of a grant to your lordship under the royal sign-manual in payment of certain monies due by the crown to your father. I trust your lordship understood the transaction at the time. I trust you now understand my resumption of its import, and hold it to be correct.'

'Undeniably correct,' answered Lord Glenvarloch. 'If the sums contained in the warrant cannot be recovered, my lands become the property of those who paid off the original holders of the mortgage, and now stand in their right.'

'Even so, my lord,' said Heriot; 'and your lordship's unhappy circumstances having, it would seem, alarmed these creditors, they are now, I am sorry to say, pressing for one or other of these alternatives—possession of the land, or payment of their debt.'

'They have a right to one or other,' answered Lord Glenvarloch, 'and as I cannot do the last in my present condition, I suppose they must enter on possession.'

'Stay, my lord,' replied Heriot; 'if you have ceased to call me a friend to your person, at least you shall see I am willing to be such to your father's house, were it but for the sake of your father's memory. If you will trust me with the warrant under the sign-manual, I believe circumstances do now so stand at court, that I may be able to recover the money for you' (vol. iii. pp. 146, 147).

But when the casket that has contained it is opened, the warrant is missing. It had, in fact, been stolen from the casket by the usurer. Nigel's expressions of surprise extort little confidence from his matter-of-fact friend.

'Ay, ay, young man,' said Heriot, shaking his head, 'make me believe that, if you can. To sum the matter up,' he said, rising from his seat, and walking toward that occupied by the disguised female, 'for our matters are now drawn into small compass, you shall as soon make me believe that this masquerading mummer, on whom I now lay the hand of paternal authority, is a French page who understands no English' (vol. iii. p. 152).

Nigel had already discovered his companion's sex, had felt that he recognised her features, and had been trying in vain to recollect where he had seen them, when her detection by Heriot removes all the mystery. We must let our author relate how he falls in love with her almost literally *stans pede in uno.*

'Here, warder,' said George Heriot, 'permit us to pass to the Lady Mansel's apartment.'

The warder said he must have orders from the lieutenant; and as he retired to procure them, the parties remained standing near each other, but without speaking, and scarce looking at each other, save by stealth, a situation which, as to two of the party, at least, was sufficiently embarrassing. The difference of rank, though in that age a consideration so serious, could not prevent Lord Glenvarloch from seeing that Margaret Ramsay was one of the prettiest young women he had ever beheld—from suspecting, he could scarce tell why, that he himself was not indifferent to her—from feeling assured that he had been the cause of much of her present distress—admiration, self-love, and generosity, acting in favour of the same object: and when the warder returned, Nigel's obeisance to the beautiful daughter of the mechanic was marked with an expression, which called up in her cheeks as much colour as any incident of the eventful day had hitherto excited. She returned the courtesy timidly and irresolutely—clung to her godfather's arm, and left the apartment, which, dark as it was, had never yet appeared so obscure to Nigel, as when the door closed behind her (vol. iii. pp. 162, 163).

If this exchange of glances left anything undone, it is completed by a visit from Sir Mungo, who, after bestowing upon his young friend much benevolent information as to the certainty of his conviction and the mode of his punishment, lets him know the state of Margaret's

affection, for the kind and prudent purpose of cautioning him against giving way to it.

With this interview end the king's experiments on Lord Glenvarloch; and, to sum up this part of his story, he receives a full pardon the next day, asks instantly the hand of the watchmaker's daughter, and is, of course, accepted.

Lord Dalgarno's business is now to be decided on. He is offered by the king the alternative of marrying the Lady Hermione, or banishment from court; and after going out of his way to insult, *de gaieté de cœur*, the king, the prince, Buckingham, and his father, he chooses the former, chiefly moved, as he states, by finding in the list of the lady's effects, the mortgage on the Glenvarloch estate. The next day at noon is the time fixed for its redemption, and, confident that Nigel cannot pay the mortgage money, Dalgarno anticipates the delight of starting the day after to take possession. But to secure a vengeance by violence if civil means should fail, he sends to him by Moniplies a challenge to meet him at Camlet Moat in Enfield Chase at four in the evening assigned for his journey, a message which that prudent servitor carefully neglects to deliver.

Lord Dalgarno, it appears, was right in supposing that the estate would not be redeemed by its proprietor; but at half-past eleven the next day, while his agent the scrivener is counting the minutes to the fatal hour of noon, Richard Moniplies, with Lowestoffe and another Templar as his witnesses, and followed by porters bearing the 40,000 marks in gold, stalks into the office, tenders

the redemption money, forces the unwilling scrivener to accept it, and bears off in triumph the title-deeds of the estate. They have scarcely departed before Lord Dalgarno arrives, and desperate at the interruption of all that remained to him, his vengeance, he resolves still to pursue his northern journey, taking with him the gold, and to hold out Glenvarloch Castle against the owner by means of his own ammunition. Unhappily he mentions the road which he intends to take, and the hour at which he is to be the next day at Camlet Moat. From the scrivener this information passes to a Captain Colepepper, a bully and bravo, who fills much too large a space in the work, but who appeared to us too trite and uninteresting to deserve earlier mention. Colepepper resolves to way-lay so rich a traveller, and Vincent, driven to despair by the failure of his schemes on Margaret Ramsay, is solicited to join him. While raging with disappointment and indignation, he is encountered by Moniplies, and in giving vent to his grievances tells the insulting proposal that has been made to him. Moniplies, anxious to save 'a kindly Scot,' and having private reasons to desire a meeting with the bravo, who is suspected of the murder at Whitefriars, forms a plan with Vincent and the two Templars to rescue Lord Dalgarno and surprise Colepepper and his gang, and Camlet Moat becomes the next day the rendezvous of three separate parties.

The first on the scene is Lord Dalgarno, followed by a page, whose horse bears the money, and accompanied by John Christie's faithless spouse, a companion whose

presence, inconsistent as it is, with Dalgarno's first object, we must forgive, while we read the dialogue which beautifully contrasts her folly and her good nature, her vanity and her shame, her regret for what she has lost and her anticipation of grandeurs to come, her fond recollection of poor old John Christie, and her love and fear of her seducer. He seats himself on Camlet Moat, and thinks over the encounter that is to come.

As he thus reflected, and called to mind the disgrace which he had suffered, as well as the causes he imagined for hating Lord Glenvarloch, his countenance altered under the influence of his contending emotions, to the terror of Nelly, who, sitting unnoticed at his feet, and looking anxiously in his face, beheld the cheek kindle, the mouth become compressed, the eye dilated, and the whole countenance express the desperate and deadly resolution of one who awaits an instant and decisive encounter with a mortal enemy. The loneliness of the place, the scenery so different from that to which alone she had been accustomed, the dark and sombre air which crept so suddenly over the countenance of her seducer, his command imposing silence upon her, and the apparent strangeness of his conduct in idling away so much time without any obvious cause when a journey of such length lay before them, brought strange thoughts into her weak brain. She had read of women seduced from their matrimonial duties by sorcerers allied to the hellish powers, nay, by the Father of Evil himself, who, after conveying his victim into some desert remote from human kind, exchanged the pleasing shape in which he gained her affections, for all his natural horrors. She chased this wild idea away as it crowded itself upon her weak and bewildered imagination; but she might have lived to see it realised allegorically, if not literally, but for the accident which presently followed.

The page, whose eyes were remarkably acute, at length called out to his master, pointing with his finger at the same time down one of the alleys, that horsemen were advancing in that direction.

Lord Dalgarno started up, and shading his eyes with his hand, gazed eagerly down the alley; when, at the same instant, he received a shot which, grazing his hand, passed right through his brain, and laid him a lifeless corpse at the feet, or rather across the lap, of the unfortunate victim of his profligacy! The countenance, whose varied expressions she had been watching for the last five minutes, was convulsed for an instant, and then stiffened into rigidity for ever. Three ruffians rushed from the brake from which the shot had been fired, ere the smoke was dispersed. One, with many imprecations, seized on the page; another on the female, upon whose cries he strove by the most violent threats to impose silence; whilst the third began to undo the burthen of the page's horse. But an instant rescue prevented their availing themselves of the advantage they had obtained (vol. iii. pp. 312–314).

The rescue, thus a moment too late, consists of Moniplies and his companions; and that moment has been lost in mounting Christie behind one of the party. But, though too late for prevention, they are early enough for vengeance. Colepepper is killed on the spot by Moniplies, the page gallops off with the treasure, and Nelly is restored to her husband: how soon, and how far forgiven, is not expressly stated. The wedding of Nigel and Margaret is now celebrated with the forms and the publicity which were in fashion two hundred years ago; and while the company are waiting the summons to the banquet, unbidden guests arrive, Richard Moniplies, gorgeously attired, and the austere form of Martha Trapbois, his new-made bride. She comes to restore to Nigel the king's warrant, purloined from him at Whitefriars by her father, and to give up to him, as the preserver of her life, the title-deeds of the Glenvarloch

estate, the redemption of the mortgage having been effected, as our readers will anticipate, by Moniplies as her agent, out of the funds collected by her father's long accumulation. The king, a guest at the wedding, and now under the influence of a hearty cup of wine, hastily knights Mr. Richard, and drops the curtain by exhorting his lords and lieges present to haste to dinner, 'for the cock-a-leekie is cooling.'

We feel that our readers must have had difficulty in following our abstract of the fable. Part of the blame we are ready to take on ourselves, but we must be allowed to throw part on our author. To confess the truth, the narrative is perplexed and unintelligible even beyond his wont. On one point, the mortgage, he appears either to have had no distinct conception of his own meaning, or to have trusted that the indolence of his readers would prevent their detecting its inconsistency. The transaction, as he has described it, affords some pretty *coups de théâtre*, but a little reflection will convince us that it never could have taken place. The property is pledged for one-fourth of its value, and Nigel is unable to borrow the money on so ample a security, though he can obtain it on the very questionable one of the king's warrant. The money indeed is advanced, and the estate redeemed, or rather the mortgage transferred, twice in the short time occupied by the fable; but each time, it is done as a great favour to Nigel, and in the first case the party advancing the money is supposed to risk it, and in the second, absolutely to give it up. But as the lender

always had in the estate itself a security of four times the amount, it is obvious that no risk could ever have been incurred, and that Nigel, without recurring to any other funds, could always have paid off his mortgagee for the time being, by having the mortgage transferred to a new creditor, not as a matter of favour, but of mutual accommodation. And thus the estate, as has been the case with half the great estates in the kingdom, might have continued subject to the mortgage, from century to century, without the proprietor or his heirs running the slightest risk of losing the lands, or the mortgagee his money.

And let us not be accused of hypercriticism, for we are discussing the mainspring of all the machinery. The contest, whether this mortgage shall be redeemed or foreclosed, first sets the fable in motion, and gives to it all its unity and connection. It is the ground, not indeed sufficient or clearly made out, of Buckingham's and Dalgarno's hostility towards the hero; it is the motive of his visit to London, and alone gives interest to the success of his claim on the treasury. It is continued throughout the three volumes, and the decision is reserved as a *bonne bouche* for the catastrophe. When we discover that the question so long and so fiercely debated never could have arisen, the whole story loses its credibility. If our novels are to consist of law, we really may demand that it be good law.

It is unfortunate that the three characters who principally support the action—Nigel, Dalgarno, and Margaret,

should be those in whom our author has been least successful. Nigel is to us less interesting than even most of his insipid predecessors. A thing never acting, but perpetually acted upon,—protected by one friend, deceived by another; but in the advantage he receives from the one, and the evil he sustains from the other, as passive and helpless as a boat without oar or rudder,—a courtier, because Heriot so advised it,—a gamester, because Dalgarno so contrived it,—an Alsatian, because Lowestoffe so willed it. Even his marriage seems the result of circumstances rather than of well-founded love, or even preference. The author is, of course, in these his dominions supreme. We believe therefore that Nigel was a man of good sense and good feeling, and that among his foibles was an overweening sense of the pride of birth, and a disposition to value others according to the number and fame of their ancestors. We believe all this because we find it so written: but if we were to judge him, like other men, from his actions, we should say that he was a man of weak judgment and facile disposition, whose pursuits, when left to himself, generally terminated in the acquisition of money. It is to solicit a claim on the treasury that he first comes to London,—it is no slight inducement to his ignoble practice of petty gambling, that it places him beyond the necessity of borrowing. And when, after only a second interview, he engages himself to marry the wealthy daughter of a mechanic, as there really does not seem to have been time for very violent love, we cannot but suspect either that Lord

Glenvarloch's pride of birth was not so overweening, or that, in conquering it, Love was assisted by the clearer perception and more rapid operation of his powerful and long-tried auxiliary—Avarice.

But his conduct, however unheroic, is unhappily not improbable: we doubt whether such a being as Lord Dalgarno ever existed. His prominent quality is malevolence, generally on inadequate grounds, and sometimes without any. It was probable that he should be hostile to Nigel's suit, while there was a chance of his patron's obtaining the Glenvarloch estate: but the instant Heriot had paid off Peregrine Peterson, a transaction which took place in Dalgarno's presence, Buckingham's hopes were at an end, and all the advantages to be obtained from Nigel's ruin appear, from the story itself, to have belonged to the person for whom Heriot was the agent. Yet it is now that Dalgarno's malignity commences. After the blow in the park, we can understand it; but till then it seems absolutely without a motive, unless we suppose one in the former feud between their families, long ago healed; which Nigel does not seem even to have known; which Lord Huntinglen remembered only as matter of history; and which Lord Dalgarno, after an English education, was less likely to have attended to than either of them. We cannot but attribute this deficiency to the practice, against which our author must permit us again to remonstrate, of writing without a digested plan. He had resolved to persecute and dignify his hero, by giving him a powerful enemy; and began to write without deciding

on a cause for Lord Dalgarno's hatred—but as he went on he forgot, or would not take the trouble, to supply one, and the work has been finished, or to speak more correctly, published, with a principal link omitted. Lord Dalgarno's behaviour, again, at the council table, where he insults all those whose hostility would be most fatal to him, and whose favour he had spent his life in acquiring, merely, as it seems, to vent his spleen upon the witnesses of his humiliation, is totally inconsistent with the powers of self-command and dissimulation attributed to him at the outset, and which are implied in the character of an accomplished courtier. It is, indeed, the constant fault of novelists to paint villainy more intense and more unmixed than it is found in nature, but our author is too superior to his companions to shelter himself under their example.

Margaret is well drawn as a city beauty and fortune,—demure among strangers, and pert where she is familiar, very headstrong and very good-natured, with a characteristic contempt of her equals, and readiness to attach herself, at first sight, to the first nobleman she meets. The suddenness of her love, her relative situation to the person who is its object, the mode in which it exhibits itself, the dangers by which it is stimulated, even the male disguise under which it becomes successful, are rather too obvious repetitions of the story of Mysie Happer and Sir Piercy Shafton. But our author in that case foresaw the mésalliance, and softened it by degrading the Percy blood with a sartorial infusion. Margaret's noble marriage was

probably an afterthought. She seems to have been originally intended for Jin Vin or Tunstall. We doubt whether any of our readers have been quite satisfied with her elevation to be countess of Glenvarloch.

The remaining characters, and they are unusually numerous, bear the *sceau de Voltaire.* It is difficult to select where all are admirable; but perhaps the very best is the King. History presented to the author a character in which reserve and familiarity, avarice and profusion, knowledge of books and ignorance of men, the most absolute pretensions in theory, and the meanest practical subservience, are so closely interwoven and so glaringly contrasted, that the boldest colouring could not be accused of caricature. And in the boldest colouring he has indulged; using only the precaution of covering his picture of united wisdom and folly, with a varnish of *bonhommie* which would have reconciled us to its apparent inconsistencies, even if we had not known them to be warranted by history.

Moniplies and Sir Mungo are both portraits of the highest merit: opposed to each other in their principal features—separated again by the peculiarities which give to each of them an existence as individuals, and yet corresponding in one tinge of nationality. Sir Mungo is our favourite—chiefly perhaps from personal feelings. When we found him invested with the office of bore, we prepared ourselves, and with as much resignation as we could muster, for his exercising it after the manner of his predecessors: and we hope that we feel properly grateful to our author, and to

Sir Mungo, for having abandoned a system which confounded in suffering, the innocent reader with the personages on the stage; and for having adopted one which, while it administers to the latter their fair quantity of torment, spares the former the ennui of hearing it inflicted, by the eternal iteration of the same sentiment, couched in the same expressions.'

Vincent and Tunstall do not appear to retain, in the progress of the story, the precise rank which was intended for them at its commencement. The latter, after having been elaborately finished, remains on our author's hands unemployed during the remainder of the work; while Jin Vin acts a more important part than could have been anticipated at his introduction. Well as he is drawn, we must confess we often wished him away: but, in a representation of London at the beginning of the seventeenth century, so important a body as the apprentices deserved perhaps to appear at full length. George Heriot is another full length in the same picture—and not so much the portrait of an individual as the representative of the commercial aristocracy of that period. The same remark applies to most of the remaining figures; they are well made out, and bear the character of the age, and of the situation assigned to them, but they are in general too distant from the spectator, and occupy too small a space on the canvas, for the minute touches which produce individual distinctness.

We propose in this article * to review the novels of Sir Walter Scott which have followed the 'Fortunes of Nigel,' beginning with 'Peveril of the Peak.'

'PEVERIL OF THE PEAK' has most of the merits and faults of its predecessors. It is so deficient in unity of action that it might be entitled 'a relation of the principal incidents which occurred in the families of Peveril, Bridgenorth, Derby, and Christian, from the birth of Miss Alice Bridgenorth, in 1658, to her marriage with Mr. Julian Peveril in 1678.'

Up to its catastrophe it is a tragedy, but it ends happily. We cannot but think that the work would have been improved if the catastrophe had been altered. Whether it be true that there is something in melancholy feelings more natural than in those of gaiety to an imperfect and suffering state; or whether tragedy owes her superiority to the freedom with which the catastrophe can be disclosed, even at the outset, or whether the great advantage of an unfortunate conclusion lie on its probability — or in whatever of these modes the fact be accounted for, we think it certain that such a termination produces a better effect, even on a first perusal, and still more on a second, than the happy event which Sir Walter, in opposition to his earlier practice, makes in 'Peveril of the Peak' such sacrifices to obtain.

If any of our readers doubt the claim of tragedy to superior probability, we must remind them that it is essential

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to the interest of a serious narrative that the hero should be surrounded by danger and difficulty. But that danger and difficulty are more likely to lead to failure and destruction than to success and happiness, is a truism which seems too obvious to require statement. When, therefore, as the catastrophe approaches, we see these difficulties smoothed, and these dangers roll off like mist, we feel at once that the materials of our narrative are drawn from the manageable world of fiction. In fact, a serious fiction terminating happily, rarely occurred before the introduction of modern romances and novels. The Odyssey is a stern picture of the infliction of merited punishment. The Iliad is eminently tragical; so is all that we admire most in the Æneid, the fall of Troy, the fate of Dido, the story of Nisus and Euryalus, and the deaths of Pallas and Turnus. Indeed, the very sense which the word tragedy has acquired, shows what was the practice of the earlier writers. As soon as it ceased to mean a mere interlude, it was used only to express a serious drama; and implies an unfortunate conclusion only because such a conclusion was generally adopted by serious dramatists.

To return to the work before us: when the attachment between Julian and Alice is first mentioned, every reader feels that their union is impossible, except in a novel. When Julian's arrest throws Alice into Buckingham's hands, we feel that she must be ruined, if what we are reading were not a novel. Still greater sacrifices are made in the trial. That Charles, who signed warrant after warrant for the execution of men whose innocence

he never doubted, should have planned the escape of the Peverils, and that the chief-justice and attorney-general should have effected it, are highly improbable. But the loss of dramatic effect is still greater. The models from which our author drew,—the trials of the victims to the Popish plot, are intensely interesting. They exhibit men of talent, learning, and feeling, contending with power and prejudice in their most detestable shape, when clothed with the forms of law. We see them refused a copy of the charge, or a list of the witnesses against them, without power to compel the attendance of their own witnesses, or to save them, when attending, from outrage; denied legal assistance, yet oppressed with every technical objection and hateful quibble of the law, and then mocked with the assertion that the court is their counsel —the court which is browbeating their witnesses, insulting their misery, and presuming their guilt. And we see them display as much spirit, coolness, and dexterity in the course of this unequal contest, as they do courage and piety at its termination. Sir Walter was well capable of infusing into his copy the interest and pathos of the best of his originals; but he surrendered all that was valuable in his trial-scene, when he resolved to terminate it by an acquittal.

Among the characters, the great blot is Finella, one of those strange beings, hovering between the possible and the impossible, but never deviating into the credible, which we fear Sir Walter will never dispense with while he continues the practice, to which every half year shows

him more and more devoted, of writing without premeditation. He is a traveller in a mist—with a clear prospect of ten yards, and all indistinctness beyond; and he never could pass the fences and the sloughs which must cross his blind path, unless he could call in the assistance of some agent, endued with powers, and governed by motives, which more prudent or more timid writers would scruple to admit. The dwarf is a mere wanton piece of absurdity; but we feel deeply grateful that he is not introduced till the middle of the third volume. Alice Bridgenorth always acts with faultless propriety, but is too little brought forward; and when introduced, is too much upon stilts, and perhaps is too perfect, to be interesting. Her conversation is one of the most glaring instances of Sir Walter's indiscriminate use of rhetoric. It has more force and ornament, and is in every respect more oratorical, than could have been expected, not merely from a retired country girl, but in the unpremeditated discourse of any person, however educated.

The other characters are all well drawn. Buckingham is one of the best full lengths, though rather caricatured throughout, and intolerably so when he is first introduced. Major Bridgenorth, as far as he is described in the first volume, is one of the author's happiest efforts. The scene in which, though sensible of the degradation, he refuses Sir Geoffrey's challenge, is full of sober pathos, and suppressed but intense emotion; but he loses ground as the story proceeds, from the indistinctness with which his motives are hinted at, and his conduct accounted for, and

still more from his constant change of intention—a change which, as it is not justified by any alteration of circumstances, or characteristic infirmity of purpose, the reader supposes to be attributed to him, merely because it is the easiest mode of disentangling the plot.

Edward Christian's treatment of Finella, and the blind precipitancy with which he rushes into the conspiracy against the king, are inconsistent—the one with human nature in general, the other with his talents and experience in intrigue: he is, however, one of the best drawn of the author's villains. His education among enthusiasts and profligates—among those who reversed the boast of Socrates, and raised religion from dwelling among men to a barren throne in the sky, and those who rejected her authority, and ridiculed her influence altogether—and at a period when 'parents had no authority, nor children any obedience, but every one did that which was right in his own eyes; when justice and compassion, and the very name of good nature, was laughed at and looked upon as the mark and character of a fool, and a roughness of manners and hard-heartedness and cruelty was affected; when in the place of generosity, a vile and sordid love of money was entertained as the truest wisdom, and any thing lawful that would contribute towards being rich; when there was a total decay, or rather a final expiration of all friendship, and to dissuade a man from anything he affected, or to reprove him for anything he had done amiss, or to advise him to do anything he had no mind to do, was thought an impertinence unworthy a wise man,

and received with reproach and contempt;'* such an education operating on a cool temper and a sagacious head, and strengthened by those most demoralising feelings, a sense of injury, and a purpose of vengeance, is well imagined to account for the bold, artful, energetic, and utterly selfish being whom the nature of his plot required our author to represent.

Julian is respectable in the part of the hero, and has less of the tendency to listen to good advice, with which his predecessors have been reproached. The legal dangers to which they have been so constantly exposed, are accumulated on his head almost profusely. In about one week he fires at Bridgenorth, and escapes murdering him only because the bullet has been drawn from his pistol—is rescued from custody by a sanguinary riot—attacks Chiffinch on the highway, and is prepared, in case of resistance, to put him to death—runs a man through the body, and is sent to the Tower on a charge of high treason. No one but a housebreaker by profession or a hero of Sir Walter's could, in the same space of time, have five times over become liable to being hanged. Sir Geoffrey, the Countess, and Lady Peveril, are probably all that our author meant them to be—characters without any strong contrasts, or nicely-balanced and compensating qualities, but naturally conceived, and clearly and consistently developed. The

* *Lord Clarendon's Life* (vol. ii. p. 39). So uniform is human nature in given circumstances, that Lord Clarendon's description of the English character during the civil wars, is often almost a translation of the account given by Thucydides of the depravation of the Greeks, by the contests in his time, between the Few and the Many.

young Earl of Derby, and the notorious Colonel Blood, are among the best sketches, and we do not recollect a more vivid picture than that of the fat keeper of Newgate. On the whole, 'Peveril of the Peak,' though entitled to no precedency, is not inferior to its brethren, taken as a class; and we close the volumes with a wish that any other novelist could write as well, and that Sir Walter would take the trouble to write better.

'QUENTIN DURWARD' is one of Sir Walter's best known works. Much of this popularity is probably owing to its subject. Almost all the characters in his other novels are drawn from British history or from British domestic life. That they should delight nations differing so much from ourselves, and from one another in habits and in literary taste, who cannot appreciate the imitation of our existing manners, or join in our historical associations; that the head of 'Le Sieur Valtere Skote' should be pointed out by a Hungarian tradesman as the portrait of 'l'homme le plus célèbre en l'Europe;' that his works should employ the translators and printers of Leipsic and Paris, and even relieve the ennui of Rothenturn quarantine on the extreme borders of European civilisation, is, as Dr. Walsh has well observed, the strongest proof that their details are founded on deep knowledge of the human character, and of the general feelings recognised by all.* But Quentin Durward has the additional advantage of scenery and characters

* See his very amusing narrative of a journey from Constantinople to England, p. 311.

possessing European interest. It presents to the inhabitants of the Netherlands and of France, the most advanced of the continental nations, a picture of the manners of their ancestors, incomparably more vivid and more detailed than is to be found in any other narrative, either fictitious or real; and that picture is dignified by the introduction of persons whose influence has not even yet ceased to operate.

Perhaps at no time did the future state of Europe depend more on the conduct of two individuals than when the crown of France and the coronet of Burgundy descended on Louis XI. and Charles the Bold. The change from real to nominal sovereignty, which has since been the fate of the empire of Germany, was then impending over the kingdom of France. And if that throne had been filled, at this critical period, by a monarch with less courage, less prudence, or more scruples than Louis, there seems every reason to suppose that the great feudatories would have secured their independence, and that the greater part of that country might now be divided into many petty principalities, some catholic and some protestant, principally intent on excluding each other's commodities, and preventing the mutual ruin which would have been predicted as the necessary consequence of a free trade between Gascony and Languedoc.

On the other hand, if the race of excellent sovereigns who governed Burgundy for a hundred and twenty years had been continued, or, indeed, if Duke Philip had been followed by almost any other person than his brutal son,

the rich and extensive countries, which under his reign constituted the most powerful state in Europe, must soon have coalesced into an independent monarchy—a monarchy far greater and better consolidated than the artificial kingdom lately built up out of their fragments, and kept together rather by the pressure of surrounding Europe than by any internal principles of cohesion.* From the times of Louis XI. until now, France has been the master-spring in European politics, and Flanders merely an arena for combat. The imagination is bewildered by an attempt to speculate on the course which human affairs might have taken if the commencement of the fifteenth century had found the Low Countries, Burgundy, and Artois, one great kingdom, and Normandy, Brittany, Provence, and the other fiefs of the French crown, independent principalities.

In addition to their historical interest, Sir Walter had the good fortune to find in Charles and Louis characters as well contrasted as if they had been invented for the purposes of fiction. Both were indeed utterly selfish, but there the resemblance ends. The duke's ruling principle was vanity, and vanity of the least intellectual kind. His first object was the fame of a conqueror, or rather of a soldier; for in his battles he seems to have aimed more at showing courage and personal strength than the calmness and combination of a general. His other great source of delight was, the exhibition of his wealth and splendour, in the pomp of his dress and his retinue. In these ignoble pursuits he seems to have been utterly indifferent to the

* This was written in 1829.—N. W. S.

sufferings which he inflicted on others, and to the risks which he himself encountered; and he ultimately threw away his life, his army, and the prosperity of his country, in a war undertaken without any object—for he was attacking those who were anxious to be his auxiliaries—and persevered in, after success was impossible, merely to postpone the humiliation of a retreat.

Louis's object was power, and he seems to have enjoyed the rare felicity of being unaffected by vanity. He had both intrepidity and conduct in battle, far more of the latter, indeed, than his ferocious rival; but no desire to display these qualities led him into war, if his objects could be otherwise obtained. He fought those only whom he could not bribe or deceive. The same indifference to mere opinion entitled him to Comines' praise as eminently wise in adversity. When it was not expedient to resist, he could retreat, concede, and apologise, without more apparent humiliation than the king in chess when he moves out of check. He was rapacious, because wealth is a source of power, and because he had no sympathy with those whom he impoverished; but he did not, like his rival, waste his treasures on himself or on his favourites; he employed them either in the support of his own real force, or in keeping in his pay the ministers and favourites of other sovereigns, and sometimes the sovereigns themselves. His only personal expense was in providing for the welfare of his soul, which he conciliated, with his unscrupulous ambition, by allowing the saints, his intercessors, a portion of his spoils. Our author's picture of his superstition may

appear at first sight overcharged, but the imaginary prayer ascribed to him is scarcely a caricature of his real address to Notre-Dame de Clery, which we copy in Brantome's antiquated spelling: —

Ah, ma bonne Dame, ma petite Maistresse, ma grande amie, en qui j'ay eu tousjours mon reconfort. Je te prie de supplier Dieu pour moy, et estre mon advocate envers luy, qu'il me pardonne la mort de mon frere; que j'ay fait empoisonner par ce meschant Abbe de S. Jean. Je me'n confesse à toi, comme à ma bonne patronne et maistresse. Mais aussi, qu'eusse-je sceu faire? Il ne me faisoit que troubler mon royaume. Fay moy doncques pardonner, ma bonne Dame; *et je sçay ce que je te donneray.*

Sir Walter has made good use of these excellent materials. His Louis and his Charles are copies, with all the spirit and consistency which even *he* could have given to creations of his own. The narrative, too, is flowing and connected; each event depends on that which preceded it, without any of the episodes, recapitulations, and sudden changes of scene which in many of his works weaken the interest, and distract the attention of the reader.

But notwithstanding all this, we do not think we should have ascribed to Quentin Durward the high comparative rank among Sir Walter's works which it has acquired partly by its own merits, and partly by the reflection of its continental popularity. The absurdity of the first outline of the adventures of Durward and Isabella cannot be removed by even Sir Walter's skill. A young soldier, or rather a young recruit, falls in love with a beautiful girl whom he casually meets. She turns out to be a princess in disguise; a war arises, and her sovereign proposes her hand

as a reward to the soldier who shall kill the enemy's commander—a reward, of course, reserved for the hero. Such a story is almost too weak for criticism. It is a curious union of almost incompatible faults. Its triteness is as offensive as its improbability. This, indeed, the author seems to have felt (as he feels, we believe, every fault into which his indolence or his haste betrays him); and by the time that Quentin has half performed the condition by half killing the commander in question, he is suddenly called off, that his uncle may nominally win the prize, and immediately place it where every experienced novel reader knew that it must ultimately rest. Now, puerile as the story would have been if Quentin had gained the lady as the slayer of De la Marck, we think that the present version is still worse. The alteration shows the author's distrust of what the reader perceives to have been his original conception, exchanges one improbability for another, and crowns the whole by making a man, whose intense selfishness has throughout the novel been his principal characteristic, voluntarily surrender a prize to which princes had in vain aspired.

Quentin Durward himself is not a character with which the reader can perfectly sympathise. His attitude behind the buffet, watching for the signal on which he is to assassinate his master's guest, is anything but heroic.

But the executioners form the great blemish of the work. Sir Walter has long been celebrated for his love of bores and his love of hanging. In the present instance he has contrived to gratify both propensities at once,

by making his principal bores of the hangmen. We must admit, however, that, in expressing our disgust at the fooleries of 'Trois Echelles and Petit André, we are writing from faint recollection, as on every re-perusal of Quentin Durward we have skipped every page into which they appeared likely to be introduced.

Public opinion has pronounced 'ST. RONAN'S WELL' to be the least attractive of Sir Walter's novels. And upon a subject which has been so much canvassed, the opinion of a few years deserves more respect, for it is the result of more discussion, than the judgment of centuries upon works which have excited only an average degree of attention. It is with great hesitation, therefore, that we ever venture to dissent from such a verdict; in the present instance it has our entire concurrence.

Whatever be the defects of his fable, Sir Walter's characters are in general admirable both in design and execution; but in this case the *dramatis personæ* have in general as little resemblance to real existences as the drama has to real events. We have sometimes been inclined to suspect that, while smarting under the annoyances of some third-rate watering-place, he revenged himself by an exaggerated copy of the brutes, bores, and fools by whom he was pestered, and then, before his disgust and indignation had cooled, worked and aggravated his sketches into the grotesque caricature now before us. We never experienced the humours of a Scottish Spa, but we conclude that they cannot much

differ from those of an English one; and we are sure that not the most under-bred guests of our worst frequented boarding-houses ever gave way to half the snappishness, affectation, insolence, and even brutality, which he has ascribed to high-born ladies and men of station and splendid descent.

At other times we have supposed that the scene was originally intended to be laid below stairs, and that Sir Bingo, Mowbray St. Ronan's, and Lady Penelope, were to have been the lady's-maid, the coachman, and the groom, assuming the rank and names of their superiors, for whom Touchwood, Micklewham, Quackleben, Mac Turk, Lady Bingo, and the rest, would have been appropriate associates; and that when the scene was raised from the servants' hall to the drawing-room, the dialogue was by some accident left unaltered. From this general censure, however, we must except Meg Dods; one of those happy creations, approaching extravagance but not reaching it, formed of the most dissimilar materials without inconsistency, which excites in the reader not the mere pleasure of admiring a skilful copy, but the interest and curiosity of an original, and recurs to his recollection among the real beings whose acquaintance has enlarged his knowledge of human nature.

We have already alluded to our disapprobation of the narrative. It is episodic, intricate, unnatural, and improbable. In using the two last terms, we ought perhaps to remind our reader that we are availing ourselves of the distinction, first clearly pointed out in an article in the

'Quarterly Review,'* between improbability as denoting the occurrence of an event against a great preponderance of chances, and unnaturalness as denoting a violation of the principles of human nature. That Mr. Scrogie should have devised his property to the eldest legitimate son of his daughter, on his marrying one of the family of the Mowbrays of St. Ronan's, was perhaps not unnatural, though a very near approach to being so. But that the two young men who dispute this title should, in perfect ignorance of the bequest, fix themselves at St. Ronan's; and that the eldest should casually encounter, fall in love with, and engage to marry the heiress of St. Ronan's; in short, that the alliance which it was the object of the will to effect between two strangers, inhabiting different countries, and unconnected by a single common acquaintance, should be about to take place by mere accident, is a coincidence so improbable, that the amount of opposing chances is incapable of calculation. That the younger should attempt to gain the advantage of his elder brother's courtship by personating him during the marriage ceremony, is *perhaps* conceivable; but that on the immediate discovery of the trick all the parties should instantly separate—that the lady should resign her lover and the lover his mistress—and that seven years should elapse without communication, without even their knowing or apparently enquiring as to the existence of one another, is less possible than the occurrence of an event against ten million chances. All the parties are described as aware

* The review of Miss Austen's novels by Archbishop Whately.

of the nullity of the fraudulent ceremony; indeed, it would have been an insult to their common sense to describe them otherwise. The real bride and bridegroom are almost in the presence of the priest who has just celebrated it. Instead of returning to have the intended rites performed, or at least the error explained, they recoil like an Œdipus and a Jocasta. The fraud of which they have not been the perpetrators but the victims, though a mere cobweb, which the slightest effort would have dissipated, appears to the one a net of iron, and disturbs the reason of the other as an inexpiable crime. Such conduct and such feelings would shock us even in any of the characters of the Arabian Nights, much more in persons of the strong sense and determination attributed to Francis Tyrell and Clara Mowbray.

We have said that the narrative is episodic. It is compared by Mowbray himself to a child's rocking-horse, always moving but never advancing. The events, such as they are, succeed one another in order of time, but this is their only relation. For much of this the hero is responsible. Sir Walter's heroes, or rather his good heroes, have long been notorious for their inactivity; but they are all efficient persons compared to Francis Tyrell. He is formally introduced in the second chapter, but does nothing more than take up his residence in the 'blue room,' kill salmon, and make sketches. He dines at the Well, and is forced into a quarrel with the blackguards whom he finds there. A challenge follows; but our author seems to have despaired of managing effectively a duel between his hero

and such a creature as Sir Bingo. He has recourse to the *Deus e machinâ* of a modern novel—a coincidence. On his way to the rendezvous, Tyrell meets with his brother and mortal enemy, from whom he parted at about the same place seven years before; they instantly fight, and both are wounded; but as this rencontre produces no further consequences, it can have been introduced only as a means, though neither a natural nor a probable one, of escaping from the previous adventure. The only other acts ascribed to Tyrell are, his giving to Mowbray a warning which produces no result, and his entering into a treaty which is not acted upon. If St. Ronan's Well should ever be dramatized, his part will probably be omitted.

There are, indeed, throughout the work indications that it was conducted without any settled plan, and published without revision. In the first chapter the Spa of St. Ronan's is described as now existing; in the last, we are told that it has for some years been utterly demolished. Clara Mowbray is at her first appearance described as slightly deranged; in all that follows she appears not only free from derangement, but a person of extraordinary talents and acquirements. It is clear, too, that an intrigue was intended between Lady Binks and Lord Etherington. Her character, passionate and ambitious, thoughtful and unprincipled—her consciousness of exquisite beauty of form and countenance—and her hatred and contempt of her husband—are the obvious materials of a guilty heroine. Perhaps our author feared that such a representation would occupy a disproportional space upon his canvas;

perhaps he anticipated difficulty in managing the details without somewhat clouding the vivacity, or sullying the purity, which are among his most brilliant characteristics. The latter supposition derives some force from the striking circumstance, that among his almost infinitely-diversified pictures of human life, one character, and that the character on which novelists in general have most relied—a faithless wife, is totally omitted. But whatever be the cause, the reader feels that Lady Binks has been too elaborately introduced to be allowed to retire in every respect the same as she came on.

If Quentin Durward has been overpraised, 'REDGAUNTLET' has, we think, been at least as much underrated; we can, however, account for the weakness of its hold on the public recollection, when we observe on how feeble a thread of narrative its splendid scenes have been strung. Darsie Latimer, a youth of birth and fortune, of which however he is ignorant, is seized by a lawless banditti, hurried at great risk from Scotland to England, and kept under restraint for some weeks, in order that his uncle may let him know who he is, and induce him to join in a Jacobite rebellion. Under all this violence he remains passive, never attempting resistance or escape; hears in silence of the indefeasible rights of King James, and of the impending ruin of the Elector of Hanover; and is saved, by the sudden dissolution of the conspiracy, not only from having to act, but even from having to make up his mind.

Meantime his friend Allan Fairford is called to the bar,

opens successfully his first cause, runs from the court on hearing of Latimer's disappearance, pursues him at the expense of some peril and much hardship, and discovers him when the whole adventure had been terminated, just in time to be one in the general *groupe* of the characters as the curtain falls. Who can wonder that such a narrative should be forgotten as soon as its meagreness and want of connexion have been detected? While we were reading, for the first time, the history of Darsie Latimer, we took it for granted that his strange seizure and detention would be adequately accounted for, and that they were preparatory to struggles in which he would nobly fall, or burst through by striking exertions of ability and determination. We never suspected that these outrages were merely the means by which an outlaw proposed to assume the legal authority of guardian, and to induce his forcibly-acquired ward to adopt opinions and conduct directly opposed to his education and prejudices. Still less did we suspect that the hero's only resource would be to write protests against the cruelty of his treatment, and hide them carefully between his waistcoat and shirt. And when we found Fairford and the Quaker resolved to brave every danger for their friend's extrication, and Wandering Willie acting the part of Blondel, we expected them to do more than simply witness the rolling away of the storm. The disappointment of all these expectations has led us, and, we believe, has led the public in general, to recur less frequently to 'Redgauntlet' than might have been expected from the extraordinary merit of many of its characters and scenes.

Nothing can be finer than the interviews between Fairford and the Pretender, or more skilful than the hints through which the rank of the apparent ecclesiastic is gradually indicated. To us, indeed, who are old enough to have been among those upon whom the genius of the author of 'Waverley' broke with the full force of surprise, these scenes have a peculiar charm, as recalling the admiration with which fifteen years ago we traced the progress of the Chevalier from Edinburgh to Derby; little aware that the work which was delighting us was to form an epoch in literary history. Of equal, though dissimilar merit, are the incidents at the fishing station. The quiet of the autumnal evening, which the reader knows to be the precursor of riot and devastation, the passive intrepidity of the quaker, and the fierce resolution of the sentinel whom he dismisses, even the restlessness of the dog alarmed by the absence of his usual companions, give to the whole scene the vividness of contrast, and the apparent truth of minute and probable detail.

But there is no end of particularising the detached beauties of any one of Sir Walter's works; and mere general praise must be trite. We cannot resist, however, the temptation of recalling to the memory of our readers the natural scenery of 'Redgauntlet.' Many of his works contain descriptions more ambitious, because they represent a bolder country; but there are none more dignified and enlivened by the association of human passions with the forms of inanimate nature. Perhaps our last remark may require some instances to make it

quite intelligible, and we are selecting almost at random, when we use as an illustration the following picture of an autumnal sunset:—

The whole was illuminated by the beams of the low and setting sun, who showed his ruddy front, like a warrior prepared for defence, over a huge battlemented and turreted wall of crimson and black clouds, which appeared like an immense Gothic fortress, into which the Lord of Day was descending (vol. i. p. 52).

Or this of the advance of the Solway just as Darsie Latimer had been rescued from its violence:—

On we went, the sky blackening around us, and the wind beginning to pipe such a wild and melancholy tune as best suited the hollow sounds of the advancing tide, which I could hear at a distance like the roar of some immense monster defrauded of its prey (p. 62).

If these images are to be paralleled, it must be from Sir Walter's own works, and we will again venture to adorn our pages by quotations which the reader may know by heart.

The sun was now resting his huge disk upon the edge of the level ocean, and gilded the accumulation of towering clouds, through which he had travelled the livelong day, and which now assembled, on all sides, like misfortunes and disasters around a sinking empire and falling monarch. Still, however, his dying splendour gave a sombre magnificence to the massive congregation of vapours, forming out of their unsubstantial gloom the show of pyramids and towers, some touched with gold, some with purple, some with a hue of deep and dark red ('Antiquary,' cap. 6).

Mordaunt had not advanced far before the wind, which had been deadly still in the morning, began at first to wail and sigh, as if bemoaning beforehand the evils which it might perpetrate in

its fury, like a madman in the gloomy state of dejection which precedes his fit of violence: then gradually increasing, the gale howled, raged, and roared with the full fury of a northern storm ('Pirate,' cap. 4).

It is impossible to call these two pairs of descriptions copies of one another; and yet it is obvious that they are the works of a single mind—of a mind so rich in poetical diction and illustration, as to be able to recur again for images to the same associations, and yet to give to each successive creation the freshness of novelty.

But the principal merit of Sir Walter Scott, as it is of Shakspeare (whom he strongly resembles both in his excellencies and in his defects), is always the variety and individuality of his characters.

This last expression may perhaps require some explanation, especially since Dr. Johnson has made it a part of Shakspeare's praise, that 'in the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakspeare it is commonly a species.' We do not understand the first part of this sentence. We even doubt whether Dr. Johnson himself attached to it a precise meaning. The human mind seems unable to imagine anything perfectly new; all that it can do is to vary the combinations of what it has known. The wildest heraldic monsters are formed of parts of existing animals: the chimæra herself was Πρόσθε Λέων ὄπιθεν δὲ Δράκων. So in the moral world we can imagine only those faculties, passions, and habits, which we have known from observation or from reflection. Of these three great divisions of

the human mind, the same *faculties* and the same *passions* belong, though in different degrees, to every individual; but the *habits* of men are infinitely diversified, and it is by the variety of their habits, and the comparative force of their faculties and passions, that men differ from one another: and according to these diversities they are classed. Thus men are called servile or independent, covetous or prodigal, tellers of truth or of falsehood, according to their habits; bold or timid, irritable or phlegmatic, according to their passions; and acute or dull, rapid or slow, clearheaded or confused, according to their faculties. Each class may be said to form a different moral species; but as the different classes are all cross divisions, the same person, according to the many points of view in which he may be considered, belongs to as many different species: and from the innumerable modes in which those different characteristics may be combined, results the infinite variety of human character. But to draw a full moral and intellectual portrait of even a single individual would be impossible. Inferior writers content themselves with giving to each character a superabundance of one or two habits, faculties, or passions. They make their kings proud, and their warriors brave; and are satisfied. Such a character is strictly not an individual, but a species. It is logically constituted of a genus and a differentia. But such are not the characters of real life. Nature proceeds not by abstraction but by concretion. We know that every individual with whom we have been acquainted, has differed in innumerable

points from every other individual; and we recognize the truth of those fictitious characters only which have also their distinguishing peculiarities, and which may be referred, according to the point in which we are for the time considering them, to one or another of many different species. This appears to us to be the great merit of Shakspeare, and this is also the merit of our author.*

To take our examples from the novel which we are now reviewing, he has given to Joshua Geddes intrepid courage, a hasty temper, and firmness of purpose approaching obstinacy. Such might have been the qualities of a freebooter; but he has added a benevolent disposition, and religious scruples against the resistance of injury. He is indifferent to personal show, but his simplicity is qualified by a taste for the beauties of nature in their ornamented state. His exterior is unassuming, but his residence is adorned by expensive gardens and conservatories. Peter Peebles is vain, litigious, hardhearted, credulous, a liar, and a drunkard. An ordinary writer would have made six characters out of the qualities which Sir Walter has condensed into one. And how bold is the relief in which it stands out!

It is to be observed, too, that a character is in general both probable and interesting, in proportion to the dissimilarity of its different constituents, provided that they are not inconsistent. Partly from the novelty of the

* As we are opposed to Dr. Johnson, we are happy in being supported by the best of all the Commentators on Shakspeare. See 'Whately's Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare'—a little work the fate of which is one of the most unaccountable events in literary history.

combination, and partly because the reader accounts for the union of qualities not suggested by one another, by fancying it to be a copy of an existing original. It is this combination that gives such vivacity to the character of Nanty Ewart. He is a smuggler, and, as might be expected, reckless and drunken. But he is also the son of a minister, and has retained of a learned education the fruits which such an education often produces—just enough recollection of his Latin to make him a pedant, and of his religion to make him hate a Catholic.

We must not quit 'Redgauntlet' without remarking what appears to us a breach of the decorum of fiction. A conversation is related as having taken place between Chrystal Nixon and Ewart in the absence of any third person, just before the struggle in which they perished by each other's hands. The resemblance of a fictitious to a real narrative requires that no facts should be stated, except those of which the relator may be supposed to have been informed. If any exception from this rule can be allowed, it is when the author describes the secret thoughts and feelings of his characters. But this exception is rather apparent than real. In a well-written fiction, as in a well-written history, those emotions only are ascribed to the persons who are the subjects of the narrative, which may either be inferred from their conduct, or might be predicted from their disposition, education, and circumstances. When Achilles, under the taunts of Agamemnon, half draws, and only half draws his sword, we feel that Homer could safely describe his mind

as struggling between prudence and rage. So in the masterly picture by Tacitus, of the feelings of Vitellius during the approach of Vespasian's army, we recognize the state of a dull and timid sensualist thrown by accident upon the highest pinnacle of human grandeur, but exposed to dangers which every day become more imminent, without the courage to resist, or even the activity and resolution to attempt an escape. But if Tacitus, instead of the terror and indecision, had related the soliloquies of Vitellius, we should have at once rejected the narrative as containing facts which could not have been inferred by reasoning, or made known except by a miracle. The dialogue to which we have been objecting has always reminded us of the celebrated Irish story of the discovery of oysters by two men thrown alone on a desert island, one of whom is said to have refused them and to have died of hunger, and the other to have gorged himself and to have died of surfeit.

In the 'TALES OF THE CRUSADERS,' Sir Walter has recurred to scenes of remote antiquity—the ground on which his course appears always the most easy, and his superiority the most marked. His talents or his habits seem to fit him rather to conjecture than to observe, to invent than to copy. A very few points, as to the state of law, of religion, and of knowledge in a people being given, he can create for them a set of customs, and of modes of feeling and of speaking, which from their consistency with one another and with the previously ascer-

tained facts, their minute detail, and their bold dissimilarity to anything existing, are acquiesced in by the reader, as having really belonged to the times to which the author assigns them; as the results, in short, of his knowledge instead of his imagination. But when countries and periods within our own experience are treated in the same manner, the difference between hypothesis and reality becomes glaring. The reader feels instantly that he is among beings cleverly imagined, but unlike any that he is accustomed to. In proportion as Sir Walter recedes from history to fable, as his lights become fainter and his materials scantier, in proportion, in short, as he is thrown on his own resources, he seems to find those resources more and more abundant, and to use them with more and more boldness and decision. As a delineator of modern manners he has many equals and many superiors. If a foreigner wished to learn the tone of British society, no one would hesitate in directing him to 'Mansfield Park,' or the 'Inheritance,' rather than to 'St. Ronan's Well' or the 'Antiquary.'

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that these remarks are not to be understood as detracting from Sir Walter's general preeminence. The power to invent, and the power to observe, are both, when possessed in a high degree, admirable qualities, but no one can doubt which is the more noble or the more rare. The authors of the works to which we have just been alluding are delightful writers, but they seem to be the abundant produce of a period of high civilisation. Centuries may

elapse before there is again the union of genius and knowledge which went to the creation of 'Ivanhoe' and the 'Tales of the Crusaders.'

We do not mean, however, when we mention these works together, to intimate that they are of equal merit. They differ as much as 'Gil Blas' and 'Estevanille,' or the 'Bachelor of Salamanca.' 'Ivanhoe' was the result of the first working of the feudal mine, while the ore was rich and abundant, and the labourer toiled with all the spirit and diligence of a discoverer. The 'Tales of the Crusaders' show that the 'bonanza' is over; that either the vein has become poorer, or the miner more careless.

Nor is the merit of the two 'Tales' nearly equal. 'The Betrothed' appears to us very inferior to 'the Talisman.' It has, however, some scenes of high excellence. The first nine chapters, which carry the narrative down to the funeral of Sir Raymond de Berenger, are equal to any passage of similar length in Sir Walter's works. Indeed, if we were required to point out the most striking passage in all the five and twenty volumes that we are now reviewing, we think we should select the night walk of Eveline and Rose on the battlements, and the low tremulous sounds that indicate to them the approaching relief.

The remainder of the story is blemished by the mummery in 'the chamber of the red finger,' and the prophecy too minutely fulfilled to be accounted for as a coincidence, and too inartificially introduced to receive the temporary assent which a reader sometimes gives to a

well-told supernatural incident. But the great fault is the inadequacy both of the causes which create the dangers of the hero and heroine, and of those which remove them. For three years, Damian is an active warden of the marches, and protector of his uncle's bride. Without the least warning to the reader, or any cause even afterwards assigned, except that he had disapproved of some intrigue between one of his followers and a miller's daughter, he is denounced as a traitor, besieged in Eveline's castle by a royal army, and thrown to await execution in a dungeon. The constable returns, explains away in a short conversation with the king all his nephew's offences, and surrenders to him his own affianced bride; their principal enemy is removed by the clumsy expedient of his being assassinated by mistake; and, in short, to use an illustration of Johnson's, all the accumulation of calamity and danger suddenly melts away like the towers of an enchanted castle, when the destined knight blows his horn before it.

Wilkin Flammock and his daughter are perhaps the best among the characters. The former especially is admirable both in design and in execution. He is brave, faithful, and kind; but these qualities, modified by a commercial education, a phlegmatic temper, and some natural coarseness of feeling, have as little resemblance to the impetuous valour and blind fidelity of the knights and squires around him, as the strength of his Flanders mare has to that of their thoroughbred war-horses.

The Lady Eveline has the resolute and devoted, but

somewhat impatient character, which might be expected in a female of high spirit and generous disposition, required in early life to exercise the power and endure the perils and responsibility of exalted station. Damian appears to us to be less naturally drawn. A young man of sense and honour meets the intended bride of his uncle and benefactor. Their interviews are few and ceremonious, but they inspire him with a passion which disturbs his reason and endangers his life, and survives an absence of years, unsupported by hope, or even by a consciousness that it is returned. Happily this is not a fair picture of human nature: our affections are not so easily opposed to our principles, or so independent of the sanctions of reason.

We have already expressed our preference of the 'TALISMAN' to the 'Betrothed.' It has, in the first place, the advantage of real over imaginary characters. Philip Augustus and Saladin are both connected with interesting associations, and Richard is amongst the most remarkable persons in history. Such powers and such energy of body and mind were never perhaps united in any other individual: and this individual was the most powerful monarch of his time. And yet the person thus prodigally gifted by nature and by fortune failed in almost every attempt of policy and war, and left no memorial of his existence except empty fame, the impoverishment of his own kingdom, and a foreign crown bestowed on a worthless companion. A description of the errors of judgment and temper by which such

powerful means of success were perverted into causes of failure, was obviously capable of affording an admirable moral lesson, and Sir Walter has shown as much skill in the treatment of his subject as in its selection.

We have sometimes heard the dissimilarity of the Richard of 'Ivanhoe' and the Richard of the 'Talisman' mentioned as an objection; and certainly there is little resemblance between the generous, open-hearted, and almost jovial character of the one, and the jealous irritability and violence of the other. But the difference, however great, is sufficiently accounted for. In 'Ivanhoe' Richard is just returned from his toils and his captivity, enjoying the contrast of his native verdure and woods, to the sands of Palestine and the dungeons of Germany. He is in the immediate prospect of recovering possession of his crown, and fills up the interval with one of those wild, unpremeditated adventures in which he seems always to have delighted, as the best field for the display of his unrivalled powers as an individual combatant. His companions are as frank and almost as bold as himself; he is unknown, and therefore has no dignity to protect, but can admit their freedoms without jealousy, and receive their deference as a sincere testimony to his merit. In the 'Talisman' he is soured by sickness and inactivity, swelling with pride as a king and vanity as a soldier, always watching for aggressions on his rank or his fame; goaded to violence by the resistance of his equals, and seduced into cruelty by the blind submission of his inferiors. The foundation of each character is the same; a disposition naturally generous, but rendered

intolerant of opposition, or even of equality, by a strong will, early habits of power, and an insatiable desire of admiration. Everything is calculated to conceal his faults in 'Ivanhoe,' and to display them in the 'Talisman;' and the dissimilar expression of the two portraits, while the outlines are the same, is a splendid exhibition of Sir Walter's skill: it is just what we should expect in real life, and should not expect in fiction.

It is almost ungracious to find faults in a character so spirited and so original as that of Saladin; but we doubt whether any reader easily admits the identity of the Sultan and the Hakim, or believes that the warrior, trained up from infancy in bloodshed and violence, would have felt the sinfulness of not endeavouring to prolong 'whatever life has been bestowed by Allah.'

Of the inferior characters, the hero is the least successful. He is a tall, solemn, and somewhat absurd person, whom nothing but the extremity of his danger can make interesting. It is impossible to speak seriously of his passionate love for the heroine, whom he has never approached near enough even to hear her voice. Even Sir Walter requires to be sometimes reminded that love is not a bodily disease, to be caught without any cooperation of the mind.

The story is not perhaps skilfully planned, but its development is masterly. The subject-matter of every scene is so interesting, and the execution so brilliant, the course of events is so rapid, and the interest so unbroken, that the improbabilities, such as they are, escape observation. It is subject, however, to a blemish, which requires

to be somewhat dwelt on, as it is an example of one of Sir Walter's few characteristic faults. Our readers will probably suspect that we are alluding to the miraculous virtues of the talisman. We apprehend that there are only two modes in which events apparently supernatural can be well introduced: first, when they can be explained away; and secondly, when the author avowedly writes a fairy tale. The Bodach Ghas in 'Waverley' and the diableries of 'Woodstock,' are instances of the first kind. The one is explained as the result of pulleys, sliding panels, and phosphorus; the other, as the creation of depressed spirits, and an exhausted and feverish frame. The 'Monastery' belongs to the second class: the existence of supernatural beings, with the power and the will to interfere in human affairs, is openly assumed; and the author professes to imitate, not what is, or what has been, or what may be, but what might have been, if the course of nature were subject to such interruptions as he describes. But the novel which we are criticising professes to be a relation of real transactions; to describe events which either did take place, or may be supposed to have taken place, during the third crusade. The introduction among these events of a manifest impossibility, is like the face of Snug the joiner shown through the lion's neck, a wilful admission of the unreality of the drama.

Another blemish is, the independence of the event which is the formal or titular catastrophe, on the previous incidents. Those who have studied Sir Walter's plots must have observed that they generally comprise two

catastrophes; one consisting of the fate of the hero and heroine, and which we have therefore called the formal catastrophe, but about which the reader cares but little—the other being some public event of great national interest. Thus the formal catastrophe of 'Waverley' is the marriage of Waverley and Rose; the real one, the failure of the rebellion. The real catastrophe of the 'Legend of Montrose' is the defeat of Argyle; the formal one, the marriage of Menteith and Annott Lyle. So the real catastrophe of the 'Talisman' is the failure of the crusade; the formal one, the marriage of Kenneth and Edith. But the latter is occasioned—not by anything that has been related, for all Sir Kenneth's sufferings and gazings entitle him, even in the opinion of his mistress, only to the permission to continue to gaze at her—but by the discovery that he is the Prince of Scotland; a rank which, as it must have at once entitled him, if not to the hand, certainly to the society of an illegitimate kinswoman of Richard's, even a less ardent lover might have expected to announce at an early period of his passion.

We like 'Woodstock' the least of all Sir Walter's historical tales. In the first place, the subject appears to us unhappily chosen. We do not object to Sir Walter's alterations of facts and characters, on account of their tendency to produce false historical impressions. The object of a novel is not to instruct; and the reader who is absurd enough to look into fiction for truth, cannot hope even to be pitied for having been led into error. We

object to them only so far as they interfere with a poet's legitimate object, to please; and they interfere with our pleasure when, by misrepresenting what is notorious, they destroy the temporary credibility which ought to belong to every narrative even avowedly fictitious. It is to prevent this inconvenience that poets, when they have introduced real characters, have almost always drawn their subjects from countries or from periods imperfectly known. An historical novel, with Mr. Pitt for the hero, could scarcely escape absurdity. Nor does this depend on the proximity of the period: for if the writer were to go back eighteen or nineteen centuries, and describe events equally notorious; if he were, for example, to lay his scene at Rome, immediately after the battle of Philippi, and introduce Brutus as the survivor in that battle, and Cicero as his companion in victory; no merits of execution could reconcile the reader to the inconsistency of the narrative with his previous knowledge.

Now, something like this is done in 'Woodstock.' Sir Walter has selected a period of high historical interest, but on that very account illustrated by a perfect blaze of evidence. Every day almost every hour in the life of Charles, from his defeat at Worcester to his escape from Brighton, is accounted for. We can trace him from Worcester to Whiteladies and the adjoining woods which gave name to Boscobel, thence to Madely, then back to Boscobel and the celebrated oak, from Boscobel to Moseley Hall, thence to Bentley, the seat of the Lanes, and thence as the servant of Miss Lane, the counterpart of Flora

Macdonald, by Long Marston and Cirencester to Abbots Leigh beyond Bristol, thence by Castle Cary to Trent; to Charmouth, back to Trent by Bridport and Broadwinsor, to Amesbury, Hambledon, and Brighton, and the next day to France. We know by whose caution and intrepidity he was concealed and forwarded, in what thickets and pits and closets he was hidden, what clothes he wore, on what horses he rode, what was his food, and even how and by whom it was cooked; and above all, we know the patience and sobriety with which he accommodated his demeanour to his circumstances. And we consequently know that he never approached the retreat, nor assumed the disguises, nor was surrounded by the companions, nor indulged in the follies and indiscretions, nor exhibited the generosity, which the author has attributed to him.

We know too, as well or even better than we know many of our own distinguished contemporaries, the public and private character of every eminent actor in that memorable and unhappy period. We cannot imagine Cromwell bursting into involuntary sentimental declamation before a portrait, or wishing for even a dog that followed him because it loved him, or directing by hints the assassination of a fugitive, or suddenly ordering the execution of all his prisoners without trial, or, without any intervening change of circumstances, passing from the extreme of cruelty to the extreme of placability. We are equally offended at the introduction of an imaginary Markham Everard, of such importance as to be pointed out as likely 'to trip up Cromwell's heels;' an incredibility as gross as if, in a

novel of the nineteenth century, one of the principal actors should be a pretender to the crown of England.

If the plan be so objectionable, the merit must of course lie in the execution. But even the details, though containing, as must be the case in a work of Sir Walter Scott's, much that is excellent, are often below his average standard. The principal character, Sir Henry Lee, appears to us, to say the truth, the 'bore' of the work.

In giving this term to one of Sir Walter's characters, we are using an expression which has become almost proverbial, and might seem therefore in no want of explanation. We are not sure, however, that we should apply it to precisely the same persons, or on precisely the same grounds, as has been done by many of his previous critics. We are far from thinking that characters which would be tiresome in real life are necessarily, or even frequently, disagreeable in fiction. Malvolio or Sir Andrew Aguecheek would have been an abominable companion. It is true that great reserve is necessary in their exhibition. Folly at full length is intolerable, But this is not Sir Walter's error. Many of his worst offenders, such, for instance, as Trois Echelles and Petit André, occupy far less proportionate space on his canvas than Shallow and Slender fill in 'Henry IV.' and 'The Merry Wives of Windsor;' and what reader ever wished for less of *them*?

The precise quality which appears to us to entitle so many of his characters to the term 'bore,' is their monotony. Monotony in some respects is indeed the fault of almost all his interlocutors. They all use a

language more figurative and rhetorical than we hear in ordinary life. And each of them has a tendency to resort to a single source for his embellishments. His agriculturist draws all his similes from crops and bullocks; his glover applies to everything the language of his trade; his lawyer illustrates every question by a reference to the forms of procedure. This affectation, however, can be tolerated as long as the uniformity of expression is relieved by variety of subject. But in many of his works he has one or two characters whose monotony of manner is aggravated by monotony of matter; whose whole minds seem to have room for only one or two ideas; whose conversation is the repetition of the same thought, and often a very worthless one, in nearly the same expressions. These persons only we feel to be 'bores;' and among the most tiresome of them is the 'very perfect, gentle knight,' Sir Henry Lee.

Shakspeare, loyalty, and fencing are the only subjects which he thinks of; and the only effect of what he says and does is to make them all ridiculous. His fencing is exhibited in most undignified contests with an intrusive menial. His knowledge of Shakspeare, though as perfect as that of a professed annotator, is supposed to have arisen from a sentimental sympathy with the taste of his master. His loyalty is not an enlarged desire for the happiness of his country; it is not a readiness to suffer any personal evils in order to preserve a constitution which he believes to be beneficial; it is not founded on any knowledge of the qualities of the person whom he

would desire to make a sovereign: it is a mere desire that a given person should reign, because his ancestors had reigned; that he should enjoy a degree of power, which experience had shown to be incompatible with good government, because his predecessors had enjoyed it. Such was, indeed, often the loyalty of those unhappy times, and such is always the loyalty of the uneducated; but its prevalence does not make it less absurd or less mischievous.

It is a feeling, however, which Sir Walter has too often countenanced. He has made it, here and elsewhere, the mainspring of many of his favourite characters. With strange inconsistency, he has even attributed it to his hero, Markham Everard. Everard is a man of sense, and a patriot. He 'has sacrificed the peace of his family, and the warmest wishes of his heart, to right the country in which he was born, and to free her from oppression.' He finds that such has been the course of events that the country has to choose between anarchy and a powerful executive; and he adheres to Cromwell, 'as the strongest, the wisest, and the most moderate of the contending parties.' More irreproachable conduct cannot be described. And yet, says Sir Walter, 'the more exalted and purer sentiments of Alice lowered him in his own eyes; and though unshaken in his opinion, that it were better the vessel should be steered by a pilot having no good title to the office, than that she should run upon the breakers, he felt that he was not espousing the most direct, manly, and disinterested side of the question.'

We are sorry to see Sir Walter's talents employed to give a preference to blind instinctive fidelity over rational patriotism; in supporting the means, legitimacy, against the end, the happiness of the country.

We have already remarked the inaccuracy of Cromwell and Charles as portraits, but as imaginary characters they are admirable. Charles is perhaps somewhat too stiff in his gallantry, and Cromwell too sentimental when he describes himself as 'having wept for the gallant heron that was struck down by his hawk, and sorrowed for the hare which lay screaming under the jaws of his greyhound;' but these imperfections never struck us, till our office forced us to pervert the work from its proper end, and to read for the purpose of criticism instead of enjoyment.

We are not sure, however, that we do not prefer Tomkins to either of them; his cunning, profligacy, hypocrisy, and enthusiasm, are combined into a character as spirited as it is original. The first and last scenes in which he is introduced, the sermon at Woodstock, and the attempt on Phœbe at the well, are among the most striking in the novel. Wildrake, Dr. Rochecliffe, Holdenough, Desborough, and Bletson, are composed of fewer materials, and therefore exhibit less power in the author, and give less pleasure to the reader; but they are natural and forcible, particularly Holdenough. There are few subjects which Sir Walter seems more to delight in painting than the meliorating influence of religious feel-

ings on an imperfect temper, even though somewhat alloyed by superstition and enthusiasm.

The principal defect in the plot, taken as a mere narrative, are the cumbrous jugglery by which the commissioners are frightened from Woodstock, and the awkwardness with which it is attempted to be explained. Its merits are unity of action and variety of incident. It is a picture full of false costume and incorrect design, but splendidly grouped and coloured; and we envy those persons whose imperfect knowledge of the real events has enabled them to enjoy its beauties, without being offended by its inaccuracies.

The first series of the 'CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE' contains four tales of unequal merit. The most striking, without doubt, is the 'Highland Widow.' We have often complained of the intricacy and want of connection in Sir Walter's plots. If he wished in the present work to show how completely he could avoid those faults, he certainly has succeeded. The scene lies in a single cottage; the characters are a mother and her son; and the only incidents, the stratagem by which a recruit is seduced to resist his military superiors, and his immediate punishment. The whole story might have been told in half a column of a newspaper. In Sir Walter's hands, it fills half a volume. But it is the triumph of his art, that the narrative thus dilated is not weakened. The interest, though almost painfully strong, does not make the reader hurry over any of the details. He feels that, with all

their fulness, there is no superfluity, and that every conversation has its influence on the final result.

The 'Two Drovers' is beautifully told, but perhaps too much resembles the 'Highland Widow' in plan and in catastrophe to be its immediate follower. The character of Robin Oig is natural and original.

The 'Surgeon's Daughter' is inferior to the two former, both in conception and in execution. It opens with scenes of mystery and violence, not very well suited to the real mediocrity of the *dramatis personæ*. The reader is disappointed, and almost angry, when he finds the masked female and the stern and haughty stranger subside into a north-country fortune-hunter, and a Jewish heiress; and that the warrant against her for high treason is merely an expedient by which her father prevents their marriage. An expedient, the success of which, considering that the parties travelled together as far as a village in one of the midland counties of Scotland, is really marvellous. The subsequent part of the narrative is equally full of inconsistencies. That the parents of Richard Middlemas, one of whom at least is described as fondly attached to him, should have allowed more than one and twenty years to elapse without even enquiring into his existence, is as unnatural as their suddenly meeting with him, and with one of the very few persons who could explain his history, is improbable. Again, the bitter invectives which Middlemas, in a formal interview with a proud superior,

reiterates against 'the parents who brought him into this world by their sin, and deserted him through their cruelty,' are an inconceivable folly, if he knew whom he was addressing, and a most extraordinary coincidence, if he did not. And the death of Zilia, her last breath poured out in song, is a physical impossibility. The sudden deterioration of the hero's character is another inconsistency. He is described as an amiable and intelligent child; he is carefully educated, and is subjected to the powerful meliorating influence of an early attachment. That with all these advantages, he might have gradually fallen under the force of corrupt examples and strong temptation, is consistent with the weakness of human nature; but that, under the influence of a single bad companion, he should be in an instant transformed into a perfectly heartless, calculating villain, is not consistent with its strength.

But with all its faults, 'The Surgeon's Daughter' is an agreeable novel. It is full of incident and variety. The early scenes are an admirable picture of what the author well understands—the middle life of Scotland. Those which are laid in the East India Company's depôt are such as we perceive, on reflection, must continually have occurred at a time when public bodies, not kept in awe by the publicity occasioned by our present rapidity of communication, could venture to pursue their great objects by means which could not, in the existing state of society, be even thought of. We have not sufficient knowledge to decide as to the degree of accuracy with which Asiatic

manners are imitated in the subsequent part of the work. But the picture, whether correct or not, certainly looks like a portrait, and has more important merits than mere resemblance, boldness of outline, and brilliancy of colouring.

Our favourite, however, among the four tales, is that of 'CHRYSTAL CROFTANGRY' himself. Sir Walter, indeed, has not here exerted the powers by which, when he thinks fit, he can enchain the attention by the interest of his narrative and the novelty of his scenery and situations. The reader has not the amusement of endeavouring to account for any mystery, or to foresee the dénouement of any complicated plot, or to wonder at extraordinary vice or virtue, talent or folly. The few characters and the few events are of every day's occurrence; but they are described with a quiet humour, a minuteness of detail, and a truth and consistency, which are to us more agreeable than many of his more popular and, as they are generally termed, more interesting inventions.

To say the truth, we doubt much whether those narratives which depend most on what is commonly called interest, though certainly the most attractive, give most real pleasure even on a first perusal, and we are sure that they do not on a second. They are addressed to the curiosity—a very powerful passion, but one, the gratification of which is rather felt to appease a want than to afford positive enjoyment. We devour them eagerly rather than agreeably; our anxiety to reach the conclusion interferes

with the calm satisfaction with which, in less exciting narratives, we watch the skilful imitation of human nature; and we close the volume more exhausted than pleased. Nor can we very soon recur to it. A mystery of which we recollect the explanation, is like a riddle that has been solved, or a pantomime to one who has been admitted into the mechanist's room. And, of course, the more striking the events, the longer and the more clearly do they remain in the memory. We must admit that such narratives have the widest immediate popularity, since all persons can follow a story, and very few can appreciate a character; but they seldom retain the permanent hold on the public attention which is the ultimate test of poetical excellence. Three of the most popular novels that ever were written, 'Don Quixote,' 'Gil Blas,' and 'Robinson Crusoe,' have less interest than even 'Chrystal Croftangry,' and are perused and reperused with unabated delight, although the sequel of events is familiar to the reader.

The second series of the 'CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE'* was published without a title: perhaps because it was difficult to apply a single title to a narrative so destitute of unity. It is, in fact, an account of the occurrences at Perth between St. Valentine's Eve and Palm Sunday in the year 1401. And these occurrences comprise, besides many episodes, three principal events—the courtship and marriage of the heroine, the death of Conachar, and the death of Rothsay.

* Now called 'The Fair Maid of Perth.'

The first, though certainly not the most interesting, nor the best constructed, must, we suppose, be considered the principal narrative. It forms the beginning and the conclusion of the work, and fills more of the intermediate space than any other single subject: but as a story it is, we must say, the most inartificial that we ever met with. At the commencement we find the Smith devotedly attached to Catherine, and Catherine sensible of the generosity and manliness of his character, but resolved not to unite herself to one who lives 'in a perfect atmosphere of strife, blood, and quarrels.' Six weeks elapse, during which her lover kills or wounds at least a dozen people, the last incident being his thrusting himself into a deadly quarrel unreasonably, perhaps it may be said unfairly. Catherine 'sighs deeply and shakes her head at the history,' and marries him as soon as his wounds are healed.

Now, it is true, that in real life people do sometimes change their minds, without our being able to discover in what respect the grounds of their former resolutions have been removed. But in fiction this is inadmissible. We know that no change of conduct can take place without a previous alteration of motives. We know that this alteration must have had a cause; and the poet who neglects to assign that cause, both disappoints our curiosity and displeases our judgment.

The fault of Rothsay's history is its uninterrupted gloom. His fortune appears dark at the commencement, and gradually blackens to the conclusion. The reader is subjected to no suspense, to no alternations of hope and fear,

A tragedy, we have been told, ought to consist of 'They will kill, they will not kill, they will kill, they will not kill, they will kill.' In Rothsay's case, the only progress is from 'they will kill' to 'they do kill.'

The story of Conachar is not liable to the same objection. It contains the variations in the chances of the game, the apparent avenues of escape opening from time to time among the surrounding dangers, which are necessary to keep up the interest of a prolonged narrative. The only objection to it consists of the prophecies of which he is made the subject. They are too detailed to be ascribed to coincidence; their insertion can be defended only on one of two suppositions, that the writer is to be considered as merely delivering the legends of a superstitious age, or that he believes such ocurrences to be possible. The first plea Sir Walter has abandoned. After having so long dwelt in mists, he has, in the present work, cast away even the decorous semblance of a veil which poets have in general thrown over their working apparatus. Both in his preface, and in the opening of the third volume, he avows himself to be not a relator, but an inventor. Such an avowal is, in itself, prejudicial to the illusion of his narrative, and makes it peculiarly incumbent on him to abstain from incidents not merely improbable, but impossible.

Among the minor events, those which neither advance nor retard the three main actions, the best perhaps are the danger and escape of Louïse; the worst, the issuing and revocation of the commission against heresy. It is issued

with much preparation and pomp; the reader is perpetually reminded of the dangers to which it exposes those for whom he is most interested; and just when the cloud seems going to burst, Lord Douglas complains of the trouble to men's consciences, and the commission is withdrawn, having produced no effect except the sealing up of the Glover's papers by an apparitor. It is a striking proof of the author's power, that he has worked these unconnected materials into a narrative inferior certainly to his own best efforts, but inferior to nothing else.

The general inferiority which we have ascribed to the plot, does not extend to the characters. It is difficult to select where there is so much excellence; but, on the whole, we prefer Conachar. His character is perfectly tragic, neither too bad for sympathy, nor so good as to render his calamity revolting; but its great merit is the boldness with which we are called upon to sympathise with a deficiency which is generally the subject of unmitigated scorn. It is impossible not to feel the deepest commiseration for a youth cursed by nature with extreme sensibility both to shame and to fear, suddenly raised from a life of obscurity and peace, to head a confederacy of warlike savages, and forced immediately afterwards to elect, before the eyes of thousands, between a frightful death and an ignominious escape.

The philosophy of courage and cowardice is one of the obscurest parts of human nature: partly because the susceptibility of fear is much affected by physical causes, by habit, and by example; and partly because it is a subject

as to which men do not readily state the result of their own experience, and when they do state it, are not always implicitly believed. The subject has been further perplexed, in modern times, by the Scandinavian invention of the point of honour. A doctrine which represents the manifestation of even well-founded apprehension as generally fatal to nobility of character. An opinion so little admitted by the classical world, that Homer has attributed to Hector, and Virgil to Turnus, certainly without supposing them dishonoured, precisely the same conduct of which Sir Walter makes suicide a consequence, without being an expiation. The result of all this has been that scarcely any modern writers have made the various degrees of courage a source of much variety and discrimination of character. They have given us, indeed, plenty of fire-eaters and plenty of poltroons; and Shakspeare has painted in Falstaff constitutional intrepidity unsupported by honour: but by far the most usual modification of character among persons of vivid imagination, that in which a quick feeling of honour combats a quick apprehension of danger, a character which is the precise converse of Falstaff's, has been left almost untouched for Sir Walter Scott.

Louise is a delightful sketch. Nothing can be more exquisite than the manner in which her story is partly told, and partly hinted, or than the contrast between her natural and her professional character.

The Smith is an endeavour to unite dissimilar qualities. He is a kind-hearted duellist. We doubt whether the attempt is as successful as it is bold. We doubt whether,

even in the miserable times in which the scene is laid, the associations of a good-natured and generous man could have been so perverted as 'to see no brawl but he must strike into the midst of it; to fight his friends for love and honour, and his enemies for hatred and revenge; and those who are neither his friends nor his foes, because they are on this side or that of a river,' retaining in the meantime all his good-nature and generosity. Professed duellists have always been a sour and selfish race; sometimes not even brave, always jealous and unfeeling; in short, in every respect the reverse of 'the Jolly Smith.'

Considerable labour appears to have been bestowed on Henbane Dwining; and nothing which Sir W. Scott has laboured can be without force; but in this instance the execution is better than the conception. Men's sympathy with the sufferings of individuals and of classes among their fellow-creatures, is often lamentably weak; it often yields to very slight emotions of anger, or interest, or national, political, or religious antipathy; but in the absence of these disturbing causes, we believe that the sight of human suffering is always painful, and we consequently disapprove generally of the character of Dwining, as one of unmixed and gratuitous malignity. We particularly dislike the early scenes between him and Ramorny. Our author seems to be as fond as Sophocles was of exhibitions of mere corporal suffering. They certainly have an interest, but it is an unpleasing one. We read, but we wish that what we are reading had not been written. We may add, that a contest between a patient insulting his

surgeon, and the surgeon wilfully torturing his patient, is unnatural, even if it were otherwise unobjectionable.

The Glover is a mixed and perfectly natural character. He has just that coarse rectitude of sentiment and conscience which might have been expected in a man of good talents and disposition unassisted by education, and injured by vicious example and a corrupted religion.

We have already mentioned the inconsistency of the heroine's conduct. She is rescued, however, from the insipidity which belongs to her caste by her religious feelings, contrasted as they are with the worldly-minded shrewdness of her father. Her great fault, a fault which she shares with all Sir Walter's heroines, and indeed with most of his less dignified personages, is a tendency to fine speaking; to clothe her meaning in words, and to arrange those words in sentences, far too elaborate for real conversation.

Douglas, Ramorny, Albany, Eviott, Boulthron, and the other subordinate agents, are fair representations of the characters likely to be formed in those unhappy times which have been called 'the age of chivalry.' An age which, although gilded over by a few dazzling qualities in a few eminent individuals—qualities, however, which they displayed only in their intercourse with persons of their own rank—was deformed by more folly, wickedness, and misery, than any other period in the records of civilised Europe.

COLONEL SENIOR.

Charles Vernon: a Transatlantic Tale.*

FICTIONS may be divided and again cross-divided into many different genera, according to the principles on which the different classifications are founded.

They may be divided, for instance, as to their form, into narrative and dramatic; as to the emotions which they propose to excite, into serious, comic, and satirical; as to the instrument which they employ, into verse and prose; as to the subjects which they paint, into elevated and familiar; as to their matter, into allegorical, historical, and purely invented; as to their premises, or the state of things which they presuppose, into supernatural and real; and, lastly, as to their peculiar merits, into those whose principal aim is excellence in plot, in characters, or in scenery.

To the last of these classifications we propose to devote a few pages before we consider the work with which this article is headed.

We must begin by explaining that we use the word Scenery in rather an extended sense, to express all the

* From the 'Edinburgh Review,' Jan. 1849.

peculiarities, material and moral, which give a general character to the events. It includes, therefore, not only the attributes which distinguish the place and the time of their occurrence, but also those which mark the class or sort of persons who participate in them. Ariel, Caliban, and even Miranda, are parts of the scenery of the 'Tempest.' So is the lime-grove which weatherfends Prospero's cell. So are the nimble marmosets, the clustering filberts, and the young sea mews from the rocks. So are the sounds and sweet airs that fill the island, and give delight, and hurt not. And such especially was the chorus of the Greek drama, which was local opinion personified.

At first it may appear that moral peculiarities form a part, not of the scenery, but of the characters of a fiction. And this is true, when those peculiarities give individuality to the persons to whom they are ascribed. For this purpose, however, they must be not only marked, but numerous and distinct. In real life, every man belongs to many classes, according to the portion of his character which, for the time being, is under view. As civilisation increases, as the intellectual powers become more extensive, the moral perceptions more sensitive, and the external relations more complicated, these classes increase in number: but even in savage life, or in the less educated portion of civilised nations, they are so numerous that no two men can be found possessing precisely the same combination of precisely similar qualities. When a man,

however, is ascribed to merely one of these classes—when he is only the fortis Gyas, or the good Horatio, no definite idea is presented to us. And, even when several qualities are attributed to him, still, if those qualities all belong to one class or genus, the picture, though it may be more brilliant, continues indistinct.

Such characters we venture to call Scenic, as opposed to those which, possessing complicated and different, though not incompatible, qualities, and belonging (as real men and women do) to many different classes, we term Individual.

Thus the suitors in the Odyssey, however vividly coloured, are not individualised. They are the idle aristocracy of a barbarous age, and have only the peculiarities of their time and their caste—sensuality, insolence, rapacity, unconsciousness of responsibility, and absence of self-control. Eurymachus, Antinous, and Agelaus, are distinguished from one another only by name. On the other hand, the heroes of the Iliad are individuals. They have all, indeed, some common attributes—bravery, pride, and indifference to human suffering. But each of the principal actors has also other qualities which, modifying one another, form combinations like those of actual life, and distinguish him from all his associates.

We may illustrate this by comparing the two most elaborately-drawn characters, Achilles and Hector. They are each men of extraordinary courage, strength, and skill; each is the great warrior of his party, and each is

aware that he will not witness the triumph of his cause. Achilles knows that he is to die before the walls of Troy. Hector

> foresees a day
> When Ilium, Ilium's people, and himself,
> Her warlike king, shall perish.*

With so many points of resemblance, in the hands of any ordinary poet, they would have been duplicates. As painted by Homer, they are not only dissimilar, but opposed in almost every detail.

Both, as we have said, are brave. The courage of Achilles is founded on insensibility to danger. Except in the struggle with the Scamander, where, for the first time, he finds his weapons useless, he seems unsusceptible of the emotion of fear.

The courage of Hector is not constitutional—he is more sensitive with respect to danger than many of those around him—than Ajax, for instance, or than Diomed. In order to induce him to offer a general challenge to the Greeks, Polydamas thinks it necessary to tell him that it has been ascertained that he is not to fall. And while the contest is still undecided, Hector is the first to propose that it shall cease. He retreats more than once before a single enemy; though he awaits the approach of Achilles while still distant, his nerves fail when the enemy is at hand, and he flies after flight has become too late. And yet he is eminently brave; but his courage is founded on a sense of duty. It depends on self-control,

* Cowper, 'Iliad,' vi.

and bears him up against all the dangers to which he is accustomed, though it gives way when Achilles advances.

Ἶσος Ἐνυαλίῳ κορυθάϊκι πτολεμιστῇ,
Σείων Πηλιάδα μελίην κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον,
Δεινὴν ἀμφὶ δὲ χαλκὸς ἐλάμπετο εἴκελος αὐγῇ
Ἢ πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο, ἢ ἠελίου ἀνιόντος.*

It is in obedience to this prevailing feeling of duty that Hector supports his country, though he knows that its fall is inevitable. His only wishes are, to retard that fall while he can, and to die when he can resist it no longer. With an inconsistency not uncommon among men of strong affections, he sacrifices his life, and, with his life, the cause of which that life was the support, rather than see the misery which the loss of a battle has occasioned. In vain, as he stands alone before the Scæan gate, do his parents implore him to take refuge within the town. The wailings of the Trojan wives, whose husbands have already fallen under his leadership, resound in his imagination; and the arguments of Priam, and the entreaties of Hecuba, are equally fruitless:—

οὐ δ' Ἕκτορι θυμὸν ἔπειθε.

Achilles has no feeling of duty or even of patriotism. The instant that he is insulted by Agamemnon he deserts the cause of the Greeks, rejoices in their defeat, rejects all

* Thus pondering he stood; meantime approached
Achilles, terrible as fiery Mars,
Crest-tossing god, and brandished as he came
On his right shoulder high the Pelian spear.
Like lightning or like flame, or like the sun
Ascending beamed his armour. *Cowper.*

proposals of reconciliation, and exults in the hope of their destruction. Even when a well-grounded apprehension that Hector's fires may extend to his own ships leads him to send out the Myrmidons to beat him off, it is from no compassion for his companions in arms. He wishes to triumph over Troy, but he wishes that triumph to be solely his own. Patroclus, indeed, whom he considers a part of himself, he would retain as an associate; but, if it rested with him, not another Greek should survive to share or even to witness it.

> For oh, by all the powers of heaven, I would
> That not one Trojan might escape of all,
> Nor yet a Grecian; but that we, from death
> Ourselves escaping, might survive to spread
> Troy's sacred bulwarks on the ground, alone. *Cowper.*

His intense self-esteem, to use a phrenological term, shows itself not only in the outline but in the details of his character. Even Patroclus is rather a favourite than a friend. He stands in awe of his great patron; and, when sent as a messenger to Nestor, must hurry immediately back, for his chief is

> Δεινὸς ἀνὴρ, τάχα κεν καὶ ἀναίτιον αἰτιόῳτο.*

To Briseis herself, though the cause of the quarrel, he is almost indifferent. He gives her up without a struggle. If any other part of his property is taken, it is at the peril of the taker; but he will not fight about a girl: —

* Thou knowest Achilles fiery, and propense
Blame to impute even when blame is none. *Cowper.*

Χερσὶ μὲν οὔτοι ἔγωγε μαχήσομαι εἵνεκα κούρης
Οὔτε σοὶ, οὔτε τῷ ἄλλῳ.*

And he immediately supplies her place by Diomede. Nothing is more finely imagined in his character than the union of a horror of death with indifference to immediate danger. The ordinary combination is just the reverse; most men see with terror the sudden approach of death, but look forward to it at some undetermined period without alarm. They hope still to live in their works, in their posterity, and perhaps in their fame. To Achilles, whose whole feelings are personal, death is pure unalleviated evil. He is willing, indeed, to encounter it for the sake of glory, because glory is essential to his happiness, and is to be obtained on no other terms. The gods have announced to him that if his life is long it will be obscure. But the glory which he desires is present, not posthumous. He has no wish beyond the grave. He faces death with courage, because he is constitutionally intrepid: but he dislikes it as much as the veriest coward. Nothing, he says, is ψυχῆς ἀντάξιον.†

It is remarkable that the author of the 'Odyssey' ascribes to the shade of Achilles the feeling which the author of the Iliad gave to the living man. The shade repels almost

* I will not strive with thee in such a cause,
Nor yet with any man. I scorn to fight
For her whom having given ye take away.
But I have other precious things on board,
Of these take none away. *Cowper.*

† In my opinion, life surpasses far
In worth all treasures. *Cowper.*

contemptuously the compliments which Ulysses addresses to it on its posthumous fame:—

> Renowned Ulysses, think not death a theme
> Of consolation. I had rather live
> The servile hind for hire, and eat the bread
> Of some man scantily himself sustained,
> Than sovereign empire held o'er all the shades.*

It is a consequence of his utter selfishness that Achilles has no candour. He sees in Hector, not the defender of Troy, but the killer of Patroclus—the instrument through whom he has suffered the greatest, perhaps the only calamity of his life; and his hatred is unappeased even by death. For twelve successive days he ties the body to his chariot, and drags it through the dust. And when, at length, Jupiter sends word to him that his conduct displeases the gods, that Priam is coming to redeem his son, and must not be refused, Achilles, though he receives his suppliant kindly, cannot command his temper through the interview, but bursts out *ὑπόδρα ἴδων*—

> Move me no more, or I may set at nought
> Thee and thy prayer, and the command of Jove.†

What a contrast is this to the self-devotion of Hector, who lives only for his wife, his son, his parents, and his country; whose over-flowing kindness can find excuses even for the cowardly frivolity of Paris; and who alone among her brothers-in-law forgets the guilt and mischief of Helen in her misfortunes!

Individual characters resemble the figures of Poussin, which delight, by the relief and the accuracy of the drawing,

* Cowper, *Odyssey*. † Cowper, *Iliad*, xxiv.

and the force or dignity or beauty of the expression. Scenic characters are like the cattle and figures of Claude —of little merit taken separately, but collectively important parts of the landscape.

Very few are the fictions which unite the merits of plot, character, and scenery. The 'Iliad,' as we have already remarked, is pre-eminent in character. There is scarcely a speech in that most dramatic of epics which could be transferred from one speaker to another. It is also magnificent in its scenery. The agents are those whom the hearers of Homer believed to be real gods; and men descended from those gods, and almost equalling them in force of body and of mind, in pride, in passion, and in self-reliance. Such beings, so grand in their general character, and so elaborately individualised, form a *dramatis personæ* which has never been equalled. The period is one so distant, that chronology has at length given up the attempt to fix it. All that we know is, that it is separated by an enormous gulf from the times of which we have authentic records; and that the forms of government, the seats of empire, and the habits of acting and thinking, have little resemblance to anything which we find in the historical period of Greece. All that surrounds the great actors is as remote from ordinary life as they are themselves.

But the drama itself is deficient. Nothing can be more meagre than the plot. Achilles is insulted; he refuses to fight; the Greeks are beaten; Patroclus, while protecting the ships of Achilles from the common danger, is

killed; Achilles avenges him by killing Hector; the two chiefs are buried, and the curtain falls; such a narrative has a beginning and a middle, but can scarcely be said to have an end. The end, says Aristotle, with his usual good sense, ought to be something which does not naturally lead to anything more. It ought to satisfy our curiosity. But is the death of Hector such an event? Does not the reader wish to know what influence it had on the war? After having become intimate during twenty four books with all the leaders on each side—after having sympathised with their hopes and their fears, and become in his heart a Greek or a Trojan, is he satisfied to leave them as he found them, engaged in mortal, but unterminated strife? And can we acquiesce in Aristotle's excuse, that the action of the 'Iliad' is not the war of Troy, but the anger of Achilles, and is terminated by his reconciliation with Agamemnon? What do we care about that anger, except so far as it bears on the war? And, while the war remains undecided, what do we care about the reconciliation? We have admitted that the narrative has a middle; but it is a most inartificial one. If the books between the 1st and the 8th and between the 8th and the 11th were struck out, no gap would be perceptible, and some inconsistencies would be avoided.

Mr. Grote has well remarked, that, with all their beauties of scenery and of character, they are useless to the catastrophe, and irreconcileable with some of the subsequent events. We cannot, however, adopt his theory, plausible as it is, that they are the work of a different

author. He admits that its unity of action shows the 'Odyssey' to be the production of a single mind. We draw the same inference from the consistency of character in the 'Iliad.' We cannot believe that the boldly-drawn and finely discriminated characters of Agamemnon, Ulysses, Ajax, Diomed, Hector, Paris, Priam, and Helen, could have been preserved through the whole twenty-four books, if the original conceptions of one poet had been taken up and worked out by another. A more probable explanation is, that the whole work was executed by one author, but composed at different times, and with considerable intervals.

The objection that we have made to the plot of the 'Iliad' does not apply to that of the 'Odyssey.' In the whole range of narrative fiction a plot more nearly approaching perfection is not to be found. At the opening of the poem, Ulysses, the sole survivor of his companions, is detained in the distant island of Calypso; while the suitors have usurped his authority, made themselves masters of his property, and are plotting against the life of his son and the fidelity of his wife. Through the middle of the story, the patience, courage, and prudence of Ulysses gradually remove the obstacles to his return. He sits at length by the side of Penelope before his own hearth, unknown to all except his nurse, his son, and two faithful slaves. For two days he lives among his enemies, ever on the point of detection, but ever evading it. At length all is prepared for the catastrophe; the suitors are assembled at the feast, Euryclea and Philætius have barred

the doors of the hall, and the fatal bow is in his hands. We know nothing in poetry so grand as the picture of Ulysses as he throws off his disguise, springs to the threshold, pours out the arrows at his feet, and announces to the suitors that the hour of retribution has arrived:—

> Αὐτὰρ ὁ γυμνώθη ῥακέων πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς·
> Ἅλτο δ' ἐπὶ μέγαν οὐδὸν, ἔχων βιὸν, ἠδὲ φαρέτρην
> Ἰῶν ἐμπλείην· ταχέας δ' ἐκχεύατ' ὀϊστοὺς
> Αὐτοῦ πρόσθε ποδῶν· μετὰ δὲ μνηστῆρσιν ἔειπεν.*

The only episode is the journey of Telemachus. The most probable explanation of the introduction of an incident, which has not even a remote influence on the progress or on the event of the story, is the anxiety of the author of the 'Odyssey' to connect his narrative with the actors in the 'Iliad.' For this purpose the shades of the mighty dead are called up on the banks of the Nile; for this purpose we are made to accompany the souls of the suitors to the Asphodel meadows, and to listen to the conversation of Achilles and Agamemnon; and for this purpose Telemachus visits Elis and Sparta, and shows us three of the favourite characters of the 'Iliad'—Nestor, Menelaus, and Helen—in the tranquil evening of their stormy lives.

The scenery of the 'Odyssey' is perhaps still more striking than that of the 'Iliad.' It is more varied both morally and physically. It adds to the gods and heroes of

* Then girdling up his rags, Ulysses sprang,
With bow and full-charged quiver, to the door;
Loose on the broad stone at his feet he poured
His arrows, and the suitors thus bespoke. *Cowper.*

Greece the fabulous Elysium of the Pheacians, contrasted with the dark Cimmerians, the cannibals of Læstrigon, and the giant Cyclopides. Instead of being confined to the plain of Troy, the shores of the Hellespont, and the forests of Ida, it embraces all the eastern coasts and islands of the Mediterranean—probably every portion of the globe which was known to the author or to his hearers. But, though superior to the 'Iliad' in scenery, and immeasurably superior in plot, the 'Odyssey' is as immeasurably inferior to it in characters. With the exception of Ulysses and Eumæus, scarcely a single actor is individualised. We have already remarked that the suitors are merely a class. Telemachus is only a well-disposed young man. Penelope neither does nor says anything to justify the wisdom which is attributed to her. She is only an affectionate and faithful wife. Alcinous and Arete are amiable sovereigns and hospitable hosts. They fill the stage, but do no more.

The admitted inferiority of the 'Odyssey,' though equal to the 'Iliad' in style, and superior in plot and in scenery, seems to prove that, of the three great merits which we are considering, character is the most important. Whether the excellence of a plot would make up for the want of striking scenery, and well-drawn and well-contrasted characters, may be doubted. No such instance occurs to us. But the fictions which delight solely by their characters, or solely by their scenery, are numerous. The two most remarkable novels of modern times, 'Gil Blas' and 'Don Quixote,' please solely by their characters. So do

'Joseph Andrews' and the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' the 'Wahlverwandschaften,' and 'Wilhelm Meister.' On the other hand, the Asiatic romances depend altogether on scenery: neither 'Antar' nor the 'Arabian Nights,' nor 'Job' have any real plot or any individual characters. It is the scenery alone that renders 'Robinson Crusoe' the most popular of English fictions. The interest ceases as soon as he quits his island. Nothing can be more childish than the plots of Cooper. Nothing can be more fantastic or unnatural than his characters. But the scenery, in which these absurd beings act their absurd parts, is so new, so interesting, and so vividly painted, that among perhaps a hundred competitors, he stands,

If not first, in the very first line.

We admire, and we forget, the wit and the finesse of Balzac, and the finely-shaded characters and well-involved and well-unravelled plots of Hahn Hahn; but the chase, the wreck, and the battle of the 'Red Rover' and the Indian warfare of the 'Pioneers,' haunt the imagination for years.

We scarcely ever read a romance more defective in plot and in character than the 'Younger Son.' The story is a mere collection of events, whose only relation to one another is that they happen to the same persons. It has a beginning, but that beginning does not explain what follows. It has a middle which might have belonged to a different set of agents; and it ends merely because the third volume is finished. The characters are caricatures, the style is

exaggerated, the sentiments are perverted. But there is a charm in its scenery. The Indian Ocean, with its calms and simoons; the Eastern Archipelago, with its mountains, swamps, and jungles; the Malay, and Arab, and Chinese, and Tartar figures, which people the land and the water, attract us by our love for what is strange. Other pictures, such as the death of the jungle admee, the elk chased by lions, and the towing of the dismasted Victory, dwell in the memory from their vividness. And we believe that few have opened the book without finishing it, and that few have read it once without wishing to recur to portions of it.

Sir Walter Scott had at his command every form of excellence. But of his numerous novels only three—the 'Heart of Mid Lothian,' the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' and 'Kenilworth,' combine the merits of plot, character, and scenery. In all the others, the plot is objectionable. In some, such as 'Rob Roy,' 'The Pirate,' 'The Fortunes of Nigel,' and 'The Betrothed,' it is unintelligible. In others, such as 'The Monastery,' 'The Legend of Montrose,' 'Peveril of the Peak,' and 'The Fair Maid of Perth,' it is a mere tissue of events, with little dependence on one another, connected chiefly by succession of time; and in two, 'St. Ronan's Well,' and 'Quentin Durward,' it is absolutely puerile. In very few, perhaps only in 'The Monastery,' 'Quentin Durward,' and 'St. Ronan's Well,' is there a want of character; but in none, with the exception of the unfortunate 'St. Ronan's Well,' is there a deficiency of scenery. It is to its scenery rather than to its characters, admirable as they are, that

'Waverley' owes its pre-eminence. It is its scenery that has made 'Quentin Durward,' absurd as is its plot, and common-place as are almost all its characters, the novel by which Sir Walter Scott is best known on the Continent.

These remarks will assist us in pointing out the characteristics of the work which we are reviewing. Its excellence does not lie in its characters, so far as they are taken from European models. The hero and the heroine are cast in the usual mould. He is brave, generous, and kind, with strong but somewhat inconstant affections. She amiable, high spirited, and intelligent. The others are equally representatives of well-known classes. There is an elderly general officer, with the common manners and prejudices of his rank; a fidgetty mother, caring about nothing but her health, her position in society, and the establishment of her daughter; a sub-heroine, the hero's sister, pleasing but insipid; a sub-hero, who is to marry her, whom the reader will forget as soon as he has done with him. A proud, selfish woman of rank, a good-natured frivolous dandy, a scheming young lady, and a merchant content to accept the opinions and follow the example of those around him, and drift indolently down the stream of sensual enjoyment, are more distinct, but do not aim at originality.

The Transatlantic characters have more merit: some of them are strongly marked and original, but we will leave them to display themselves as we proceed.

The story is amusing and natural, but wants unity and

cohesion. The incidents are very numerous, but the greater part of them have no influence on the ultimate catastrophe. Nor is that catastrophe one that excites much interest. The reader is led to wish to see the hero and heroine both well provided for; but has no desire that it should be by their intermarriage. He would be as well satisfied, perhaps better, if the heroine were to make a different choice.

Such being the characters and the plot, our readers will infer that it is the scenery of 'Charles Vernon' which has induced us to select it for criticism. Even so. The physical scenery is striking from its grandeur, its variety, and its novelty; the moral scenery, from its strangeness. And the latter has not only a poetical but an historical claim on our attention. It describes the state of society in Jamaica and Venezuela, when slavery was in its unmitigated vigour in the one, and revolutionary war was raging in the other. Both these have passed away, and have passed away almost unrecorded: a few military autobiographies, now slumbering among the unbound lumber of the British Museum, or in the corners of provincial circulating libraries, are all that tell the story of the Venezuelan war of independence; and as they relate only the operations of armies or personal adventures, they give us no insight into the feelings of the people during the struggle.

Of the social state of the West Indies, at the beginning of the present century, we know nothing. The planters and the merchants, with their Oriental luxury and Oriental

harems, and the dark beauties living only to please, but maintaining self-respect in a state which in Europe is one of degradation, and affection and fidelity under circumstances which, with us, lead to utter profligacy, have scarcely left a tradition of their existence:—

Omnes illacrymabiles
Urgentur ignotique longâ
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.

The physical features of the Spanish main have been made known to us by the pen and the pencil of Humboldt; but the scenery of the Blue Mountains of Jamaica—the most striking combination perhaps of grandeur and beauty that exists, a Tyrol under the Tropics, is as undescribed as that of Central Africa. The few who have visited it thought of cotton and coffee, and treated rocks, rivers, and forests as mere obstacles.

The work before us attempts to supply these deficiencies; and we proceed to show how far it is successful.

The scene opens with the arrival in Jamaica of Captain Charles Vernon, a young English officer, who comes to take possession of his property; a sugar estate on the coast, and a coffee plantation in the mountains. The date is not given in so many words; but, on comparing it with the public events which are related or alluded to, it must have been in the beginning of the year 1813. He lands at Kingston, and dines the first day with his merchant, Mr. M'Kenzie. At dinner the conversation naturally turns on the mode of life at Kingston. From the answers to some of his inquiries, Vernon infers that there is not much female society.

'Not many ladies,' said the counsellor with a smile, 'but then we have the women of colour—the brown ladies, who, *entre nous*, have much finer persons, and a hundred times more animation than your European women. You'll think so, I'll answer for you, as soon as you know both.'

'Well,' said M'Kenzie, who had been listening to the conversation, 'you shall judge for yourself, Captain Vernon. Go to-morrow night to the assembly; I will introduce you in the morning to the ladies at my friend Otway's; his daughters will be very glad to get hold of a young officer. The day after we will get up a quality ball for you.'

'A quality ball! pray what does that mean?' asked Vernon.

'A brown dance,' said M'Kenzie.

'What! a ball to which mulattoes are asked?'

'Yes; the coloured men are of course excluded: my housekeeper shall superintend, and take care that it shall be very select.'

We pass over the white assembly to make room for the Quality Ball.

As Vernon entered, the younger part of the company were dancing with great animation to the merry tune of 'The Devil amongst the Tailors;' those who could not find partners dancing with each other.

One lovely girl particularly attracted Vernon's admiration. She looked about eighteen, and was dancing with another dark-eyed beauty with more grace than spirit. An expression of feminine mildness, of sweetness of temper, subdued the animation of her full black eyes. Her complexion was so slightly tinged with brown, that the mixture of African blood would not have been detected in any other society. He even thought that this shade of colour softened down and improved the expression of her features, as the mellow tints of an old picture add to its effect.

His stare attracted his hostess, who renewed her offer of introducing him to a partner.

'Yes,' answered he, 'I should like very much to dance if you

can get me as a partner that beautiful girl who is dancing with another in a plaid dress.'

'Oh, Miss Julia;—yes, I dare say I can; but she would like you better if you had your red coat on, Captain Vernon.'

'Who is she?'

'Why, she is the daughter of old Admiral Leslie; her mother lived with the admiral at the Penn while he commanded here, and he gave her two houses and several negroes when he left the country. She is a good girl, but I wish she was wiser. Her mother had a deal of trouble and expense in sending her to Miss Mary's school, and getting her genteelly brought up, and hoped with her pretty face to have her well settled with some gentleman who could buy her plenty of houses and negroes. But Hi! this not do for Miss Julia; when she come to be sixteen years old she ran away with an officer to camp, who had nothing but his pay.'

'And is she now under this officer's protection?'

'No, poor girl: the officer died of fever a year ago, and she, poor fool, was ready to break her heart after him, though he could not leave her a dollar to buy her mourning with. But come, they have finished that dance, and I will introduce you. Julia, my dear, this gentleman wishes to dance with you; he is a soldier officer, though he wears a blue coat.'

We shall not accompany Vernon in his visit to his mountain estate of Mount Edwards, or relate the wrongs which he redresses, or the improvements which he introduces. Negro slavery is the blackest page in our annals. The lesson to be found in these pages may be useful to those, if there be any such now remaining, who believe, with a writer in the 'Quarterly Review,'* that the substitution of apprenticeship for slavery was only a nominal change. It may be instructive to those also, if there be any, who require to be informed what are the effects of irresponsible power on individuals taken from the nation

* P. 118.

least likely to abuse it—a nation in which the dislike to inflict, or to witness, or even to hear of human suffering, however deserved or however necessary, is often carried to an excess which defeats its own object; a nation which often refuses to the law of man the power adequately to repress crime, and even strives to prevent the laws of nature from punishing idleness, improvidence, and vice. But the picture is too painful for our pages.

It is followed by his courtship of Julia *à la mode de la Jamaique*: the result is, that they agree to meet at Cane Garden, Vernon's estate on the northern side of the island, lying in a rich but unhealthy soil in a valley opening towards the sea. At Mount Edwards Vernon's task had been easy. He had found there an active vigilant despotism, under which, by the exercise of unscrupulous cruelty, the labourers had been lashed into as much diligence as man in a state of slavery can be forced to exert. He had only to blunt the stimulus of punishment, and to supply its place by that of reward; and nearly the same amount of labour was obtained, though with more trouble and at greater expense. At Cane Garden, also, he finds mismanagement, but of a different kind. The vice here is not oppression but negligence. The good-natured indolent overseer had smoked away his time to keep off, he said, the fever, and allowed the slaves to be half idle, the land to be half cultivated, and the buildings to be half ruinous. Much exertion is necessary to bring the estate into better order.

None of the neighbouring proprietors resided; and their substitutes being all low vulgar men, Vernon had no society but Julia's. Though she would not take her place at the dinner-table, yet she would stay in the room when there was no other white person present; and sometimes take a seat, when the dessert was introduced. She never, however, made her appearance before a third person; not from any sense of degradation as to the situation she filled, for that situation, according to the notions in which she had been brought up, was an honourable one; but solely from custom, and a feeling of inferiority originating in colour — a feeling so inherent in all her class as to be acted upon unconsciously.

He is attacked by the fever of the country, and owes his life to the care and devotion of Julia. As soon as he becomes convalescent, the usual remedy of change of air and scene is prescribed. He makes a cruise, lands at Porto Bello, crosses the Isthmus of Darien, and gazes on the Pacific. On his return to Kingston, perfectly recovered, he dines with the Otways and meets the heroine, Emily Vivian, whose father, General Vivian, has arrived during his absence, to fill a staff appointment, and brought out with him his wife and daughter. Emily Vivian, as we have already hinted, is a scenic character. She is painted as Elizabeth wished to be, without any shades. She is described as possessing, and, to do justice to the author, we must add that she is made to exhibit, intelligence, taste, elegance, knowledge of the world, and high principles. She is a distant relation of Vernon's, the intimate friend of his sister, and an acquaintance of his own, though a slight one, as she had just left school when he

joined his regiment in Portugal about five years before the story begins.

He accepts an invitation to form one of the general's party at Spanish Town during the following week.

'Ah, Charles,' said Julia, as he almost unconsciously described his new acquaintance, 'Ah, Mr. Vernon, I fear you are going to fall in love with this lady! And then what will become of poor me!'

'Oh no,' answered Vernon, 'how can you think so? Do you not know, my dear Julia, that I love you too well for you to be in danger from a rival?'

'Still, take care: I know you love me now, but I am afraid that your affections are fickle. I shall always be afraid of your going to that lady's house.'

'I am very sorry to hear you say so, Julia, for I am engaged to be there a great deal during next week. We make a party together to Spanish Town, to the balls there.'

A smothered sigh was her only answer; and he tried but in vain, to remove her uneasiness. Perhaps his own mind was not in the best state for this purpose. Though it may sometimes flatter, it is on the whole generally teasing to be the object of jealousy, especially where it is felt to be unfounded. Julia's beauty, her affectionate tenderness of disposition, her sweetness of temper, and above all, perhaps, her warm attachment to him, gave her a hold which he thought no other woman could have on his affections. It was impossible, he thought, that he could ever wish to give her a rival; and if he could, every principle of gratitude must prevent his doing so.

Still he was sensible of much admiration of Miss Vivian, and a wish to see more of her; and both the admiration and the wish were irritated by Julia's imprudent expression of her fears. Absurd as he thought these fears were, still he saw that they would disturb the new source of pleasure which was opened to him,—a pleasure great anywhere, but inestimable in the mental famine of Jamaica.

After a short mutual silence they retired, with less agreeable feelings towards each other than they had felt since their first intimacy.*

The natural consequences follow. He becomes every day more and more in love with Emily, though resolving to be constant to Julia. The contest in his mind is well described. We have heard this situation objected to as trite. It is certainly a common one. It has been painted by perhaps a hundred, perhaps a thousand novelists. But the mere commonness of a situation or of an event does not unfit it for fiction. What can be more common than love, except perhaps marriage? But no one objects to the one of them as a trite situation, or to the other as a trite event.

The triteness which displeases is a state of things usual in fiction, but unusual in reality. Thus the nexus which Metastasio introduces into almost all his plots — that of two friends in love with the same woman, and each magnanimously anxious to give her up to the other—is striking the first time that the reader meets with it, bearable the second, and disgusting the tenth. So love at first sight is offensive in the Marivaux school, but not in Shakspeare. We accept it in Shakspeare because it occurs in his scenes as it occurs in real life, occasionally, but rarely. We object to it in Marivaux because he describes it as an ordinary occurrence, as the rule, instead of the exception. Now the situation of a man bound to one woman by gratitude and to another by love, under deep obligations to

* Vol. i. p. 148.

the inferior and full of high admiration for the superior object, hating himself for his inconstancy to the one and despising himself for his deceit to the other, is a situation more frequent in reality than even in fiction, and, like all other natural situations, is a fit subject of representation.

The Vivians pay to fever the usual tribute of new comers. On their convalescence Vernon recommends a visit to Mount Edwards. The physician supports him, and thither the party go.

After about a fortnight the rainy season begins.

'What a gale of wind it blows!' observed Emily to Vernon, as they were sitting over their chess-table, after breakfast, four or five days after the heavy rains had set in.

'Oh, it is nothing,' said Vernon '(check to your queen); we are so high up here, and so exposed, that every blast of wind sounds to us as if it had double its real force. It is very cold, though; the thermometer, I see, is only sixty-eight. I will put on another log.'

'Nay, but do look at that mango tree at the side of the garden, how it bends; and that date tree next is waving like a peacock's feather to the wind, which seems to blow from all quarters at once. Look! Oh look, Mr. Vernon!'

The mango tree was at this instant torn up by the roots, whirled into the air, and carried out of sight.

'My dearest Miss Vivian,' said Vernon, 'do not be so alarmed. It does indeed blow a gale; but this is a very substantial house, and has weathered many real West Indian hurricanes, even if this gale of wind should increase to one.'

'A hurricane, by God! Vernon,' said the general, entering the room in his flannel dressing-gown, just as he had been roused from his mid-day nap.

'Oh, general, general!' said Mrs. Vivian, running in also,

'what shall we do? Old Juba tells me this is a hurricane. A real hurricane! We shall all be blown away, like the trees in the garden that I see flying into the air like so many large feathers.'

'No be 'fraid, massa,' said Cæsar, following; 'him hurricane for true, but me know hurricane worser dan dis no blow great house down. Him really 'trong 'tone house; no like for neger house — poor neger house all blow 'way.'

Fresh gusts of wind fast succeeded each other with increased violence. Soon not one of the beautiful trees in the garden was left standing; cedar, orange, apple, and all the larger trees being torn up by the roots, while the slender stems of the cocoa-nut, cabbage, and date trees were snapped off in the middle.

The party were next terrified by the walls of the house which they were in, shaking and cracking; and a general rush towards the door took place.

Hardly had they gained the other wing of the house, when that which they had just quitted, walls and all, gave way, though, as Cæsar had observed, a most substantial building. The roof entire, without loss of a single shingle or beam, was carried up into the air, by the wind getting under it, and the walls fell in with a tremendous crash.

The boards and beams of the two floorings were seen rushing through the air, knocking down all that came in contact with them. Little time, however, was left for observation, each successive blast roared louder and louder, and the remaining part of the house threatened every instant to crush its inhabitants.

They stood for some seconds; the women in speechless terror, and Vernon and the general in vain attempting to conceal their own alarm, while trying to moderate that of their companions.

Suddenly, the wind getting under the remaining part of the roof (since the fall of the wing totally unprotected), tore it up also, throwing down within the walls the ceiling and some of the beams, but carrying away the greater part to a distance.

By one of the timbers which fell within, Vernon was knocked down, not, however, so seriously hurt but that he rose immediately, and supported Mrs. Vivian (the general having hurried forward

Emily) out of the ruins, expecting that the now unroofed walls would instantly fall in.

As they gained the outer door they were in danger of being taken off their legs by the force of the wind, and hurled through the air like the beams of the roof which were spinning round in the eddies of the wind.

Cæsar's experience and presence of mind saved them from this fate, by pulling down the general and Emily with him, as they reached the door, and calling out to them, and to Vernon and Mrs. Vivian as they followed,—

'Massa no try for walk, or wind blow 'trong carry massa 'way,—blow him into de gulley! Massa lie down crawl like for pickininny on de ground.'

And creeping on all-fours in this way, they took refuge in the kitchen,—a low, almost circular out-house built of stone; and barring the door against the blast, flattered themselves that they were secure. They were disappointed; for after they had witnessed (through the narrow loop-hole window) the blowing down of the coffee store, the overseer's house, the neighbouring negro-houses, and every possible place of refuge; not a tree standing,—beams, trees, branches, wooden shingles with large nails in them, flying about in every direction, carrying destruction to every living thing they encountered,—the night coming on, the rain pouring in torrents, and the gale increasing, the kitchen gave way, injuring nearly all, more or less, but none severely.

As a last resource, and almost a forlorn one, the party next betook themselves to a cellar under the ruins of the Great House, endeavouring to hope, that if the walls fell in (and they heard stones dropping from them every instant), the flooring above their heads might not be beaten in. This chance, so feeble as scarcely to support a hope, afforded the only possibility of escape.

It was now six in the evening, and the night was setting in.

There was one sheltered corner where Mrs. Vivian, as the greatest invalid, was accommodated with a seat on an empty flour-barrel. Emily stood on a loose plank which Vernon contrived to fix against the wall sufficiently high to raise her from the stream of water which ran through the cellar.

Vernon stood next to her, so near that as he leant his head against the wall, it almost touched hers. The rest of the party either stood leaning against the shaking walls, or paced up and down their narrow cell. Two were placed with their backs against the door to prevent the wind from bursting its bolts; this duty the men took by turns.

One of the servants, on taking refuge in the cellar, had brought with him a candle in a lantern: it was hung up in the driest corner, and threw a glimmering light over the room.

The countenances of all betrayed their feelings. The whites seemed most to dread being crushed to death; while, in the negroes, their present sufferings, from cold, wet, and bruises, overpowered every other sensation.

Suddenly one of the walls of the house above gave way before the blast, which luckily hurled the stones from, instead of upon, the cellar; but still some part fell on the boarded flooring over their heads with a tremendous crash. All conceived that it was the fall of the whole house; it was followed by the scream of the women and children, and, as they supposed, the dying prayer of the men.

Vernon bent over the board on which Miss Vivian was leaning, threw his arm round her waist, and exclaimed, 'We will die together!' The substantial flooring, however, withstood the shock, and after the breathless pause of a few seconds, Emily struggled from Vernon and freed herself. Both were too much agitated to speak, and the attention of every other person present was confined to his own suffering and danger.

'Mr. Scott,' said Vernon in a low voice, 'will you accompany me, and try to reach the mill-house, and see if it is standing?'

'I will; but I warn you of the risk.'

'Never mind that, except on your own account. General — Mrs. Vivian, good bye; Emily, if I never see you more, sometimes think of me. Come, Scott.'

They fail in this attempt to find a more secure refuge, but the hurricane gradually dies away during the night,

and when the prisoners see the white dawn through the chinks in the flooring over their heads, they can venture to leave the cellar.

We pass to a moral storm, as vividly painted as the elementary one.

Early the next morning, while Vernon was superintending the repairs, Emily walked beyond the garden, towards the road leading to Kingston.

All around her was desolation, yet notwithstanding her fatigue, her spirits never felt so buoyant, or her hopes so bright. It was certain that Vernon loved her, and she now found it certain too, though she had before tried to disguise it to herself, that she loved him.

Wrapped in the delights of a reverie which no one enjoys more than once in a life, she reached at last the bank of the once rivulet, now a broad river, which ran across the gully beneath, and found herself with astonishment nearly a mile from the house.

Though a good deal sunk, the torrent seemed yet formidable; its yellow waters rolling down trunks of trees, which whirled and spun round in the eddies occasioned by their rapid motion. Just as she was turning back, a negro, whom she thought that she recollected as having carried messages from Vernon to the general when in Kingston, appeared on the other side, armed with a long pole. She stopped to witness his attempt at crossing, which seemed attended with risk. The water was about breast high in the deepest part, but the rapidity of the current was so great, that none but a strong, active, and experienced man could keep his legs. If he fell he would be rolled over and over, and hurried down the stream without a chance of saving himself. To these dangers must be added that of being struck by the large rolling rocks and trunks of trees.

Steadying himself with his pole, the negro encountered all, watching for each rolling fragment of rock; sometimes leaping over it with his pole, sometimes running forward, or drawing backwards to avoid it. At length he reached the opposite side of the river.

'Who are you?' asked Miss Vivian.

'Me Vulcan.'

'And where do you come from, Vulcan? whom do you belong to?'

'Me belong to Massa Vernon, and me come from Kingston. Bring him paper from him wife.'

'His wife! You must be mad! It cannot be Mr. Vernon you mean.'

'Yes, missis, me mean Massa Vernon for me massa. Me bring him paper from him wife, Miss Julia; one brown lady lib in Kingston. Massa hab him for wife long time.'

'I cannot, I will not believe this,' said Emily, thinking aloud.

'Yes, missis, massa hab wife long time, and him good brown lady; no use poor neger ill.'

To confirm his story at the doubt of which he felt indignant, he put into Miss Vivian's hand an unwafered note, saying,—

'Look, missis; here da paper.'

Emily just glanced her eye over the superscription, 'To Captain Charles Vernon, Mount Edwards,' written in unformed feminine characters. She gave back the letter to Vulcan, and turned towards the house, while he slowly followed, prevented by his ideas of respect from passing her.

At the door she perceived Vernon watching her approach. As he advanced she returned his salutation in a tone which she attempted to render easy, and which to a common observer would have seemed so, but which to him carried an indescribable appearance of emotion. Immediately afterwards he recognised Vulcan.

'Paper for you, massa,' said Vulcan. Vernon's eye caught the well-known writing, and he instantly felt that Emily's was fixed on him. He felt his face, his very lips turn white, and his hand trembled so that he could scarcely take the letter. Emily looked at him for an instant, the bitterest perhaps in her whole life, and passed on.

Three days are passed among the ruins, during which Emily avoids any explanation, and Vernon does not ven-

ture to force one. At length the roads become passable, and the whole party return to Kingston.

The conflict in Vernon's mind destroys his health. He is advised to try a cooler climate, and embarks for Canada in a brig called the 'Flora.' A storm scatters the convoy, and the 'Flora' finds herself alone, and, as the captain conjectures, near the eastern point of Cuba.

At daybreak the following morning, a sailor was sent up to the mast-head to look out for land; but instead of this he sung out, 'A sail right aft!' The breezes were very light, and the sail so far off that she could be seen only from the mast-head: whatever she was, however, she was clearly gaining on them, and with this impression the captain descended, at seven o'clock, to breakfast, looking ominously serious. Vernon, still in his cot, at first heard the tidings of their being chased by a possible enemy with the indifference with which he had treated the storm the night before: this apathy the captain of the Flora mistook for a want of courage, and reascended to the deck, muttering something about 'a soldier.'

He was disagreeably interested in reconnoitring the strange sail, which now had very much gained on them, and, through a glass, was clearly to be seen from the deck. She was a black schooner, very broad in the beam, and, whether friend or foe, was crowding canvas. She was soon afterwards observed to wet her sails (which increases speed by making them hold more wind), and betrayed an anxiety to get up with the Flora, which strengthened, almost to a certainty, the captain's suspicions of her being an enemy. The Flora then also wetted her sails, and threw some of her deck cargo overboard; but still the strange sail evidently neared her rapidly, and by ten o'clock was so close that an English flag could be discovered from her mizen; she was prodigiously large for a schooner, and full of men,—two discoveries, neither of which pleased Captain Robins of the Flora. He descended again to the cabin, and asked Vernon, who was still

lounging in his cot, 'if he intended skulking there, or taking his post on deck?'

'Skulking! Captain Robins, what do you mean?'

'Why, here is an American privateer very near close alongside of us; but the Flora shan't strike to her till we have tried her cannon. Will you and your servant assist in defending the ship?'

'Of course,' said Vernon, jumping out of his cot with more vivacity than he had felt since his illness; and in two minutes he sprang up the companion-steps, calling to Pompey to follow him.

'Massa no top on deck,' said Pompey; ''pose buckra fight, den massa get killed.'

'No, Pompey, we must both do our best: so do you take one of those cutlasses, and don't tremble so if you can help it.'

He found all on deck prepared for action; six eight-pound carronades (three on each side) and a long twelve-pounder at the stern, were the whole of the Flora's armament; these were immediately loaded, and the boarding netting fixed up. The crew were then each assigned to their stations. They consisted of the captain, mate, and boatswain, sixteen seamen, their passenger, and poor Pompey—an appalling inferiority to the privateer, who, from the crowded state of her deck, appeared to have at least a hundred men.

The seamen were all stationed at the guns, and Vernon and his servant had each a musket given to them, while some boarding-pikes and cutlasses were brought out from the arm-chest, and placed ready for every one's use in case the enemy attempted to board. These arrangements completed, the Flora's crew awaited in anxious uncertainty the approach of the schooner.

Vernon stood at the stern, next the captain, and, after viewing her with the glass, observed,—

'An immense superiority of numbers she has, captain, if she prove an enemy.'

'Yes, but she is much lower in the water than we are, and does not appear to carry any large guns.'

'I can only discover two swivels on each side,' observed Vernon, still looking through his glass, 'and one long gun, and that midships.'

'Well, if we can keep her at long shots I don't fear her; and if we have the luck to hull her, we may sink her; or if we strike her rigging and masts, we may at any rate disable her so as to escape.'

'And if she boards us?'

'Why then, as she is low, she will find it a difficult job.'

'At any rate, captain, we will not give up while there is a hope.'

'No, that is not my character. Jack Robins has beat 'em off before now.'

'Holloa, there! bring up the Union Jack, Williams; we will at any rate show our colours, and she may then favour us with a sight of her true ones.'

The Union Jack was accordingly hoisted, and the schooner answered by pulling down her assumed English flag, and displaying in its place the stars and stripes of the United States, firing, at the same time, a shot at the Flora.

'Yankees, by G—d!' exclaimed the captain; 'put the helm up; we'll give 'em a broadside;—steady—now let fly into her, boys!' and a raking broadside from the Flora fully evinced her determination to defend herself. But the range was miscalculated; the shot passed over the schooner with little or no effect. The privateer rapidly came up, and all the crew mounted on the rigging, or stood on their vessel's side, so as to show their immense superiority of numbers, giving three insulting cheers, and, hailing the Flora through a speaking-trumpet, desired her to 'Strike to the American privateer Washington.' The Flora's brave little crew gave three cheers in return, firing into her as an answer. The schooner's topsail haliards were cut away, and the sail dropped fluttering on the deck. The privateer returned the fire instantly; the two ships were soon within pistol-shot, and Vernon could not help instinctively wincing as he heard the grape-shot and musketry from the first fire of the privateer, whiz about his ears. He found that it cured him most effectually, however, of any of the apathy which fever had left behind; his blood warmed, and his spirits rose with the danger.

Broadside now succeeded broadside from the Flora, and volleys

of musketry from the privateer. After this had continued for some minutes, the schooner running her bowsprit over the Flora's quarters, indicated an immediate intention of boarding. About twenty ruffianly-looking fellows an instant after crowded up the narrow bowsprit of the privateer, covering it completely, brandishing their cutlasses, and, mixed with their pistol shot, pouring forth a volley of curses on their adversaries. The Flora's crew seized each a boarding-pike, a cutlass, a musket, or an unfixed bayonet, and ran to the side of the ship where the attack was threatened. Vernon was amongst the foremost; and the foremost of the Americans, after damning his own heart and liver, and discharging a brace of pistols at Vernon (one of the balls of which passed through his coat collar), swore he would give no quarter, but would make mince-meat of him and heave him overboard to feed the sharks. He was in the act of springing down on the Flora's deck, when Vernon discharged his musket at him (he had reserved his fire for this occasion), and felt strong pleasure at seeing him pitch head foremost into the sea. The two Americans next on the bowsprit made a similar attempt; but the first was pierced by a pike, as he was endeavouring to get over the boarding-netting: and the other, on reaching the deck, was cut down. The courage of those behind failed, and they suffered the ships to part; but two of the Flora's crew had now fallen to rise no more, struck by the vollies of musketry; and Captain Robins, his mate, and four of the crew were so badly wounded, as to be compelled to leave the deck, leaving only the boatswain to command. Vernon also missed his servant Pompey from the reduced numbers on the deck; and feared that he was either killed or severely wounded.

The remainder of the crew, however, still kept up the contest. Some marksmen stationed at the privateer's mast-head were employed in aiming at those whom they took for the commanders of the Flora's crew, and especially at the helmsman — no one being able to retain this important post more than ten minutes before he was struck; but the next in turn regularly took his place, even without waiting to be called.

Vernon was standing close to the rudder, taking aim at these

marksmen in the enemy's tops, when the man at the helm, mortally struck in the breast, fell against him, and threw him down under him. He was covered with blood, and, as he threw him off, and rising witnessed the convulsions of death distorting the man's face, he felt shocked, even if fear had no part in his feelings.

The deck now presented a horrid scene, two thirds of the crew lying there either killed or wounded; and the quantity of blood spilt in so small a space, made it one continued pool, and so slippery that it was difficult to avoid falling. Vernon was once knocked down by either a splinter or a block falling on him; and afterwards the barrel of his musket turned off a ball which, had it struck him, would have gone through his heart.

The privateer meanwhile, finding that her fire had succeeded in thinning the numbers on the Flora's deck, made a second attempt to board. Eight of the crew, the boatswain, and Vernon were all who remained unhurt and able to oppose them; and the Americans, observing the small number of their opponents, crowded up their bowsprit, and leaped down on the Flora's deck with great confidence. Vernon cut down the first boarder, shot another, and was engaged with the third, when a musket-ball struck him in the arm: his cutlass dropped from his hand, and a blow on the head from the cutlass of his opponent laid him senseless at his feet, apparently dead. The small remainder of the Flora's crew, finding opposition now hopeless, gave way, and jumping down the main-hatchway, left the deck to their conquerors.

The scene now returns to Jamaica, where it left Julia, parted, as she believed, for ever from the only being in the world whom she really loved.

A burst of tears and hysterical sobs alarmed Clara as she supported her mistress to her bed, sick in mind and body, and ill prepared for the anxieties which awaited her; and they followed in rapid succession. The gale of wind which scattered the convoy, disturbed her sleep, and shipwrecks and drowning men haunted her dreams.

Next came vague rumours, which no one can trace, of an action at sea. Some say that the 'Flora' had been captured after a hard fight — others, that she had been sunk; all is disheartening and uncertain. Then the 'Flora' is retaken by an English cruiser and brought into Port Royal, and the more accurate intelligence is dreadful. That Vernon is wounded and a prisoner is certain; but no one can tell more. Days of suspense become weeks, and still no further information is obtained.

The same rumours reach Emily in a more authentic form. She meets at dinner at the Otways the captain of the frigate which had retaken the 'Flora,' and hears from him the story of the action with the privateer, mixed with praises of Vernon's gallantry. She finds herself very often calling to see her friend Margaret Otway—led there, as she apologises to herself, by the hope of being able to learn some tidings for Harriet Vernon.

On one of these visits she is told that the ladies are out, but soon to return. She sits, and is turning over the sketches of an album, when she hears a plaintive voice in the verandah asking for Mr. Otway; a servant answers that he will soon return; and leaves the stranger leaning for support against the jalousied partition between the verandah and the drawing-room.

She was well dressed, her tall figure wrapped in a shawl, which could not conceal that she would soon be a mother. Her face retained traces of great beauty, but emaciated, making her soft eyes seem preternaturally large. She trembled and might have fallen but for the support against which she leaned. Emily rose and called for a servant, to desire him to offer the visitor a chair; but

Sambo had disappeared and there was no bell; so she went out herself and invited the poor girl to come in and rest herself until Mr. Otway came in. 'Let me support you,' she said, for the stranger's agitation seemed to increase at her presence; 'lean on me, and I will help you to the sofa, for you look very ill.'

But the object of her kindness shrank from the gentle arm, as if it would have enveloped her in the folds of a serpent.

Emily gazed for an instant at the unhappy creature. The truth then flashed on her. It must be the writer of Vulcan's letter. She whom he had called his master's wife, who now, broken-hearted and fainting, lay on the floor at her feet.

Under other circumstances she might, perhaps, have recoiled from further contact. Now she felt only compassion. She placed a pillow from the sofa under Julia's head, then filled a glass from the water jar standing in the window, sprinkled it on her face, and, as she revived, held the water to her lips.

'Drink and you will be better,' she said. 'Now let me raise you;' and, disregarding her faint resistance, she supported her to the sofa, loosened the string which impeded her breath, and spoke to her in a soft voice which pierced Julia's heart like a sword.

Julia felt the superiority of the being who bent over her. The mind, which shone through Emily's countenance, awed her weaker spirit. She felt that she was known, yet not despised: and this made her rival appear more than human.

'You are better now?' asked Emily.

'Thank you—yes; now leave me, dear lady, you are too good to wait on poor me. I came to ask if he had been heard of: but oh? I shall never see him more; and, now that I have seen you, I know that it would be no use. If my child survives me, be kind to it.'

She took Miss Vivian's hand, kissed it, and suffered herself to be assisted to the kittereen which was waiting for her,

'You will pity me, and let me know,' she said to Miss Vivian, who had accompanied her to the carriage, if you hear anything of him. Your servant Phebe will know where to find me.'

Emily felt too much agitated to encounter the Otways, and she

hastened home filled with compassion for a creature so young, so beautiful, so gentle, and so inexperienced,—a fair vessel wrecked on the quicksands of a vicious society.

Further tidings arrive in the form of a set of bills drawn by Vernon, at Barcelona, in the Spanish main. It is clear, that at the date of those bills he was living. The news comes opportunely.

Julia's spirits were soothed at a critical moment, for the day afterwards she gave birth to a daughter. But worn down by months of anxiety and ill-health, her recovery was slow. Her mother was with her, but she had always been harsh: there never indeed was much sympathy or confidence between them; the tie was that of mere instinct. Her own infant, a beautiful fair child, reminded her only of its absent father; she grew more and more nervous and weak, and her life seemed to hang on a thread. Hope was gone: all that she valued or cared for had vanished like a dream. Religion was to her a mere form. She had never been brought up to trust to its support.

Day followed day without change or comfort, until one morning she was lying on the sofa where Vernon had parted from her. Her memory was recalling his last words and looks, as she pressed his child to her breast. Clara sat on a stool at her feet. Suddenly Pompey entered the room, which was darkened to keep out the sun so that he could not at first distinguish the inmates. Clara started up and asked if his master was with him. 'No, Clara,' he replied, recognising the voice. 'You neber see good Massa Vernon no more. Him dead. Me see him go out for fight, and him killed; him neber come back.'

A faint groan from the sofa did not reach his dull ear; but Clara shrieked out, 'Oh Pompey, you kill poor missis,' as she raised Julia's head from the pillow on which it had fallen back. But it was all over. The loving gentle spirit had departed.

Pompey had returned to Jamaica with Captain Robins and the rest of the wounded crew of the Flora; and from

Captain Robins some accurate information is now obtained. The privateer had captured a Dutch sloop, put into her his wounded prisoners. and sent them to Barcelona, then in the hands of the Patriots, but menaced with an attack by the Royalists. It was there that Vernon drew his bills on Jamaica. After waiting for some weeks, during which the less severely wounded men recovered, news of the approach of the Royalists came, and Vernon marched out with the whole garrison of Barcelona to repel them. Captain Robins added, that Vernon assured him that, if he lived, he should not be many days absent. For he intended merely to assist in defending the approach to the town. If the invasion succeeded, of course, he must retreat with his own friends. If it were repelled, he should leave them to pursue their success. So far, and no further, he thought his interference justified.

After news of the success of the Patriots reached Barcelona, Captain Robins daily looked for his return. But time passed on, and he heard all sorts of reports as to the fate of his passenger ; that he had been killed in action ; that he had been taken prisoner; then another report was current, that he had deserted to the other side, and that a reward was offered for his apprehension.

'I waited and waited,' said he to his employer, Mr. Otway, 'and could hear nothing more. My belief is that the poor young gentleman has come to some untimely end; killed, most probably, fighting where he had no call. I saw how ready he was at that work when he fought beside me in my brig. So I chartered the droger which brought us here, and I brought that cowardly

Pompey back with me. If Mr. Vernon is dead, some one I suppose will pay me for his passage.'

A short time after the events which we have just sketched, a set of happy-looking tourists were sitting after dinner in front of a large tent, near the falls of the Essequibo river. They consisted of Mr. B., the Fiscal of Demerara, his wife and daughter, and two officers, Major Alexander and Lieutenant Blagrave from the garrison, and their negro attendants, King, George, and Peter. The ladies sing.

'Look there!' said Mrs B., as soon as the song was finished, 'I would not interrupt you; but who can those three savage-looking men be? Don't you see them there, just behind that steep pointed rock over the falls. They are not Indians, for two of them have long beards.'

'They must be a party of wood-cutters,' answered Mr. B., 'but I did not think that they ever wandered so far up the river; and, wild looking as they often are, I never saw any half so uncivilised as these ruffians.'

'May they not be deserters?' said Major Alexander; 'the regiment had some men missing a few months ago, who were supposed to have been drowned by the upsetting of a boat on the Demerara river. I really think these must be the very men—two of them have a military carriage — I will go and examine them.'

And the three gentlemen, escorted by the two servants, advanced towards the uncouth-looking strangers, who moved forward to meet them as soon as they perceived that they were seen.

As they approached, the appearance of the strangers became yet more suspicious; the beards of the two taller men had not been shaved for weeks, their clothes were in rags, and one of them was barefooted.

The third was shorter, of a slight make, and had little or no beard. All looked wild, haggard, and exhausted, as if enduring both hunger and fatigue: they came on boldly, however, and

seemed to be foreigners; for the oldest looking said something to one of his companions in a language which was not English or Dutch. 'Stand and surrender,' said Major Alexander, still believing that they were deserters.

'Who are you?' asked the fiscal — 'have you a licence for wood-cutting?'

'Somos Espânoles?' asked Lieut. Blagrave, proud of his accomplishment as a linguist.

'Tan till dere, you damn runaway rascals,' exclaimed black Capt. Peter, who had now got behind the intruders and was pointing his gun at them.

Thus accosted and menaced on all sides, the suspected men stood still, but looking hardened and unabashed. Major Alexander, overflowing with military zeal, was on the point of stepping forward to seize by the collar the foremost, who provoked him especially by the audacious way in which he continued to stare at him, when the man exclaimed 'Alexander! I did not quite recognise you at first — though I thought I knew your voice — how rejoiced I am to meet you here!'

'If you do know me, you might at least call me by my rank. I am Major Alexander: I don't recollect you — but I fancy you will not rejoice that you have met with me — and yet — but it cannot be — were you ever at Eton, sir?'

'Yes, Alexander, and your fag there; ten years have no doubt so changed the little boy, Vernon of the fourth form, who used to get your breakfast at Holt's, that you could not recognise me — even were I more like my usual self; — you are less changed in appearance.'

Vernon's history has already been brought down to the time when he marched out with the Patriot garrison of Barcelona to repel the Royalists. The republican army took up its position at the mouth of the Boca Pass, which separates Venezuela from Cumana. After some days of anxiety, early one morning a horseman galloped in to say

that the Royalists were coming down in force; that they had driven in the Patriot outposts, and when he last saw them, were about three miles from the Cumana entrance of the pass. The patriots mustered to meet them in the pass; and Vernon, with about 150 Indians under his command, was sent forward with orders to ascend the higher ground on the left side of the Boca, endeavour to precede the main body and gall the enemy, and protect his own friends by firing down from the heights. He gains the cover of some palmetto trees, rising from the edge of a promontory, immediately over a reach in the pass.

Long and anxiously he looked down, but all was still and silent — no living combatant was to be seen, though the quick eye of Maoro discovered the bodies of three men and a mule lying close together, half covered by the waters of the river into which they had fallen, proving that some conflict had just taken place; but it was impossible to judge to which party these fallen soldiers had belonged, or whether the republicans were advancing or retreating. After a suspense of some minutes, which seemed to be hours, he heard a few dropping musket shots higher up the pass.

'That must be the advanced guard of our friends,' said he to Maoro: 'they have passed us, and are engaged with the first skirmishers of the royalists; but as yet they have encountered no numerous opponents. Hark! — still only single shots, and at intervals. Ha! that was a volley! now they are opposed by a larger force.'

Maoro did not reply, but listened attentively, and hearing sounds which Vernon's duller ear could not detect, whispered —

'The soldiers are running back.'

In a minute afterwards they saw a party of about thirty men, evidently in flight and disorder, running down the pass; and as they neared and turned the angle of the road where it wound round the base of the cliff on which he was standing, scaring

away two black vultures, which rose slowly and reluctantly from the bodies of the dead men or the mule, Vernon was grieved to recognise the fugitives as republicans, and some of the very troops which had marched out with him from Barcelona.

In a few seconds a small party of royalists followed, much scattered and in hot pursuit. As the chase passed rapidly by, some shots were fired down on them from Vernon's Indians without appearing to take any effect; and they rushed on, and were soon lost at a turn of the pass further down. For a few minutes all was again silent; then a sound of voices and the trampling of horses, and then a body of cavalry were seen slowly picking their way over the impediments of the road, as they wound their way down the pass; then followed long files of infantry, marching in a straggling, disorderly manner, with the relaxed step of tired men, and frequently falling out of their ranks to drink of the stream which was flowing on beside them, and then limping along, in a sort of half-run, to regain their places. This was evidently the main body of the royalists.

Vernon could not doubt that they would soon encounter his friends, and that the struggle, when they met, must be short and decisive. Hemmed in by the cliffs on each side, the shock of the meeting would resemble that of the combatants in the lists of a tournament; and whichever side first flinched must be driven back in irretrievable defeat. He ordered his Indians to keep concealed, and not to throw away their small stock of ammunition in a useless fire on the long lines of royalists who continued to struggle past below his ambush. Probably the Indians felt no desire to take an active part, and would joyfully have witnessed the destruction of both parties. The fall of every white, whether royalist or patriot, was to them one tyrant removed.

Minutes passed on, and still there was no indication of the expected conflict. Nothing to be heard but the hum of voices from the long straggling column beneath, mixed with the brawling of the stream, or the angry voice of some leader urging on his tired followers, and ordering them to close up their ranks.

Vernon's suspense became intolerable, and he was on the point

of withdrawing from his place of concealment and rejoining the patriots, when the booming sound of cannon shot was followed, in rapid succession, by the rattle of musketry, and the echoes of the narrow defile multiplied the reports.

It soon became evident that the advance of the royalists had been arrested, for that portion of their column still within Vernon's view first closed, and then seemed to be alternately swayed backwards or forwards, as the pressure from the front or rear rolled the masses to and fro, like a river meeting the tide. Riderless horses now came galloping back from the front, breaking through the ranks, or plunging wildly into the river; the roar of cannon sounded nearer and nearer; the crisis of the combat was at hand, and Vernon directed his Indians to open fire, from the edge of the cliff, on their opponents below.

The distance was too far for any certain aim, but still the effect was too galling to be tamely borne; and he observed the royalists detach a party who clambered up the side of the ravine, where the brushwood afforded them fair cover from the shots of the Indians, to force him from his vantage ground, the possession of which was every instant becoming more important to whichever side could maintain it. A fierce effort ensued. The royalist leader led his men gallantly on, but they fought under immense disadvantages; they were picked off by the Indians while climbing up places where they could not find firm footing to return the fire, which was fast thinning their numbers.

Loose rocks were rolled down on them; and arrows, and even stones, were discharged with fatal aim. Still their leader continued to ascend, clambering up under cover of bushes and rocks, and taking advantage of every inequality which the brow of the bank presented, with a presence of mind and courage which compelled Vernon to feel interested for so gallant an opponent: and if his followers had equalled their officer in activity and courage, they would probably have won the summit, and scattered their opponents.

But this was not the case. Many men had fallen killed or wounded, and still more had either stopped, crouching under the

protection of some rock or hollow, or had retreated back to their main body; and the royalist colonel, for such was his rank, found himself almost unsupported on the top of the cliff. He was a tall, handsome man, about forty years old; his figure thin, but showing great muscular strength.

The Indians rushed forward to attack, and Vernon to save him. The royalist officer turned round to cheer on the soldiers, whom he hoped to find closely following him, but not one remained; and he was seized at the same instant by two Indians, who wrested his sword from his hand, while Vernon called on him to surrender.

Never to rebels and savages! exclaimed the Spaniard, wrestling fiercely with his captors.

As he spoke the republicans made a halt, just after the bend, where the road a little widened, opened their ranks, and drew forward and pointed three guns. They were discharged at the retreating masses of the royalists, and succeeded by a close fire of musketry.

For a minute or two nothing could be seen except the white smoke curling upwards, but a rushing sound of footsteps, accompanied by loud cheers and wild cries, told that the patriot forces were making a furious charge, when the veil of smoke rolled away, the royalists' column was dispersed; the dead and the wounded alone remained, watched by a number of black vultures, who were towering high in the sky, awaiting the coming feast; the rest had fled, and the republican troops were hurrying on in pursuit.

According to the practice of that hateful war, the prisoner, who turns out to be an old comrade, is condemned to be shot. Vernon asks the life of his friend, is refused, throws up his commission, and at night, with the assistance of his Indians, rescues the prisoner, and they fly together towards the Oronoko.

We have not room for the story of their escape, and of their residence with an Indian tribe on the banks of the Iribi. It is graphically painted, and is ornamented by

one of the best characters in the work—Carlos, a half-caste Indian whom they take into their confidence.

And now having restored Vernon to life, we refer the reader to the work itself for the means by which his marriage with Emily is ultimately effected or prevented.

We have said that the English characters are generally scenic; natural and consistent, but not individualised. The Transatlantic characters are individuals, probably portraits. The Governor of Barcelona,—the priest with whom Vernon and his friend Sanchez take refuge, and his niece,—the village authorities of St. Fernando and Aragu,—Xaltalma, and her Indians,—all start out from the canvas.

But the character of most merit is Julia. She has the qualities that belong or ought to belong to the heroine of a tragedy. Virtues enough to interest the sympathy of the reader, faults enough to lead him to acquiesce in her misfortunes. And the whole is so harmoniously drawn and coloured, her excellencies and her defects so run into one another, that the reader is never startled by an unexpected contrast. He foresees where she will act well and where she will act ill; her misconduct never weakens his interest, and her merits never lead him to consider her as the victim of calamities totally undeserved, and therefore revolting. Her punishment may be excessive, though much less so than that of Lucy of Lammermoor, or Amy Robsart, but it is not shocking.

SIR E. BULWER LYTTON.

The Last Days of Pompeii — Zanoni — The Last of the Barons — Night and Morning — Lucretia.*

THE list which we have prefixed to this article, contains some of the most remarkable works, of one of the most remarkable novelists, of this age of novels; of a novelist of European, indeed, of more than European celebrity. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton is read, original or translated, wherever Spanish dollars are spent, or English porter is drunk. It cannot be necessary to call attention to writings far more popular than our own, but a Journal which is supposed to give something approaching to a general view of contemporary literature, ought not to omit works which are among its most distinguished ornaments; and although we cannot pretend to extend their popularity, we may be usefully employed in stating our own views as to the grounds on which that popularity rests—in stating to what extent we concur in the general verdict of approbation, and how far it appears to us to be ill-founded or deficient; the points in which it falls short of our estimate of the author's merits, and those, if any,

* From the 'North British Review.'

in which it exceeds them. For this purpose we have selected from the long succession of works with which Sir Edward has almost covered the wide field of fiction, five, as among the most characteristic specimens of his great and varied powers. Two of them are historical. The manners and habits are copies, or at least are suggested by originals which have long disappeared: but in one the actors are wholly invented, in the other, many of them are real characters. Another is purely imaginary. The author supposes a state of things which never has existed, and never can exist, and peoples his hypothetical world with fictitious inhabitants. The two which remain paint the present, they represent England in the 19th century. It is very seldom that a critic has the advantage of seeing his author under so many different forms.

But Sir Edward has done still more. He has admitted us to his laboratory. He has told us what were his objects, and what were the means by which he endeavoured to attain them. He has himself supplied the canons by which he wishes to be judged. As nothing is more instructive to a moralist than autobiography, nothing is more instructive to a critic than autocriticism. All that we have to regret is, that he has not been more explicit and more definite. The prefaces and appendices which he has added to his tales, valuable as they are, would be more useful if he had not often employed words in a manner differing from their ordinary acceptation; or if, having employed them in a sense of his own, he had formally defined them. We extract from the preface to

'The Last of the Barons,' the following passage, partly as an illustration of our last remark, and partly as introductory to some further views which we think deserving of consideration.

It is when we compare works of imagination in writing, with works of imagination on the canvas, that we can best form a critical idea of the different schools which exist in each; for common both to the author and the painter are those styles which we call the Familiar, the Picturesque, and the Intellectual. By recurring to this comparison, we can without much difficulty classify works of Fiction in their proper order, and estimate the rank they should severally hold. The Intellectual will probably never be the most widely popular for the moment. He who prefers to study in this school must be prepared for much depreciation, for its greatest excellencies, even if he achieve them, are not the most obvious to the many. In discussing, for instance, a modern work, we hear it praised perhaps, for some striking passage, some prominent character; but when do we ever hear any comment on its harmony of construction, on its fitness of design, on its ideal character, on its essentials—in short, as a work of art! What we hear most valued in a picture, we often find the most neglected in a book—viz. *the composition;* and this, simply, because in England painting is recognised as an art, and, estimated according to definite theories. But in literature, we judge from a taste never formed,—from a thousand prejudices and ignorant predilections. We do not yet comprehend that the author is an artist, and that the true rules of art by which he should be tested, are precise and immutable. The literary history of the day consists of a series of judgments set aside.

But this uncertainty must more essentially betide every student, however lowly, in the school I have called the Intellectual, which must ever be more or less at variance with the popular canons; it is its hard necessity to use and disturb the lazy quietude of vulgar taste, for unless it did so, it could neither elevate nor move. He who resigns the Dutch art for the Italian, must continue through

the dark to explore the principles upon which he founds his design—to which he adapts his execution; in hope or in despondence, still faithful to the theory which cares less for the amount of interest created, than for the sources from which the interest is to be drawn—seeking in action the movement of the prouder passions or the subtler springs of conduct—seeking in repose the colouring of intellectual beauty.

The low and the high of art are not very readily comprehended; they depend not upon the worldly degree or the physical condition of the characters delineated; they depend entirely upon the quality of the emotion which the characters are intended to excite, —viz. whether of sympathy for something low, or of admiration for something high. There is nothing high in a boor's head, by Teniers,—there is nothing low in a boor's head, by Guido. What makes the difference between the two?—The absence or presence of the Ideal! But every one can judge of the merit of the first—for it is of the Familiar School—it requires a connoisseur to see the merit of the last, for it is of the Intellectual (vol. i. p. xxv).

We understand what Sir Edward means by the Familiar School. It is the school which pleases by the accurate imitation of ordinary life. Its types are Fielding and Miss Austen. We understand too what he means by the Picturesque, or, as we have called it, the Scenic. It is the school which pleases by the beauty or the sublimity of the natural objects, or by the novelty of the manners and habits, which it describes. To this class belong some of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, and all those of Cooper and of Mrs. Ratcliffe. But what is the Intellectual School? It must be something different from the first and from the second, for Sir Edward's classes are distinct, each excludes the two others. In the ordinary sense of the word it describes a fiction addressed rather to the

intellect than to the feelings, one which interests not by rousing the passions, but by offering to the judgment an analysis of the less obvious portions of the human mind. Of this class of fictions, the most remarkable is 'Don Quixote, and next, perhaps, comes 'Robinson Crusoe.'

This, however, is not the sense in which Sir Edward uses the word; for he appears to include among intellectual fictions, all those which we are now reviewing, and certainly includes among them 'The Last of the Barons,' a work quite as much addressed to the passions as to the reason. Some expressions in the passage which we have quoted, might lead the reader to infer that by 'intellectual,' Sir Edward means merely an elaborate work, a work in which the writer, after having deeply meditated the principles of his art, has done his utmost to carry them out. But as he distinguishes the familiar from the intellectual school, he excludes from the latter some of the tales to which the rules of art have been most carefully and most successfully employed. 'Tom Jones,' for instance, and 'Persuasion.' By intellectual, therefore, he cannot mean elaborate.

On the whole, we are inclined to think that Sir Edward uses the word '*intellectual*' to express *tragic*. Not in its common acceptation of calamitous, but in its original meaning, of serious. In this sense an intellectual fiction is one which addresses itself only to our more earnest emotions; which endeavours to excite our pity, or admiration, or awe; which does not invite us to be amused by brilliancy or wit, but to sympathise with courage and

patience, in which we have not to smile at follies or weaknesses, but to abhor vice or to shudder at crime.

But if this be Sir Edward's meaning, we cannot admit that the principles of serious fiction, or to use a shorter expression, of Tragedy, are less understood than those of Comedy, or that the former is more difficult of execution than the latter.

The progress, if it can be called progress, which the science of criticism and the art of poetry have made. since the times of Aristotle and Menander, has been so slight and so irregular that we scarcely know by what media of proof Sir Edward's views can be supported or attacked.

Whatever be the class of subjects which he selects, the poet, whether serious or comic, must in a great measure 'explore in the dark the principles upon which he founds his design—to which he adapts his execution;' but we are inclined to think that as a Tragedian he will have most assistance both from criticism and from example. In fact, serious narrative fiction was the first form which literature assumed — comic narrative fiction was one of the very last. And this was to be expected. Fierce passions and ludicrous weaknesses and affectations exist, without doubt, in human nature in all its varieties; but it is only in a refined and complicated state of society that the latter are sufficiently remarked to be selected as subjects of imitation and exposure. And in poetry, perhaps, more than in any other employment of the mind, the theory is gradually elicited from the practice, the science slowly follows the art.

If, again, we estimate the comparative difficulty of these two forms of composition, from the comparative success with which they have been attempted, we find in almost every language the number of eminent tragic writers by far the greater. How few are the great comic writers of Greece, how much fewer are those of Rome! What are the really great comic novels of modern Italy, except those of Boccaccio; or of France, except those of Le Sage; or of Spain, except those of Cervantes?

Sir Edward appears to have been led into these opinions, partly by the natural tendency of an author to over-estimate the difficulty and the importance of the branch of art which he himself peculiarly pursues, and partly by carrying much further than we think legitimate, the analogy between poetry and the other imitative arts, painting and sculpture. 'When,' he asks in the language of a pictorial critic, 'on discussing a modern work, do we hear any comment on its harmony of construction, on its fulness of design, on its ideal character; on its essentials, in short, as a work of art?' Certainly we do not hear such comments, for they would be inapplicable or vague; they belong to painting, not to poetry.

Harmony of construction in a painting means the absence of the intermixture of ludicrous and serious images. Such an intermixture is habitual in Dutch paintings, and not uncommon in Flemish. It is found even in Rubens' 'Raising of the Cross.' Some of the great Italian masters are not free from it. It is sometimes, as in Hogarth, very effective, and adds both truth and

force; in general, however, it offends. Why it offends is not easily explained: probably because, as painting can represent only a single place and a single instant, the ludicrous portions of the picture show that some, at least, of the spectators or actors did not feel the seriousness of the principal event; and perhaps, as the eye takes in the whole at once, it may be disagreeable to pass rapidly backwards and forwards from one emotion to another. But well managed tragi-comedy is of all poetry the most delightful. Who would remove the comic scenes from the Alcestis of Euripides, or from Henry the Fourth? Who would part with the Baron of Bradwardine or Dugald Dalgetty? Even in the darkest of Walter Scott's tragedies, in the 'Bride of Lammermoor' and in 'Kenilworth,' he has largely mixed the ludicrous with the severest tragic elements, crime and fate.

Again, in a poem, what is 'fulness of design'? Is it individuality in the characters, or is it a well-constructed plot? It can be neither of these, for it is something for which writers are rarely praised. We suspect that Sir Edward uses these words without any definite meaning.

The last quality which Sir Edward enumerates among the essentials of a work of art, is 'its ideal character.' Here we believe that we do understand, but if so, we dissent from him; and as the difference of opinion is important, we will explain our views at some length.

The object of serious painting is partly to afford the pleasure derived from imitation merely as imitation, and partly to represent beauty of form, colour, and expression.

We might perhaps add, to represent power; but the means at the painter's disposition scarcely enable him to represent more than dignity, and dignity may be considered as one of the elements of beauty. This may be effected by exhibiting the human form and features in perfect repose. Many of the noblest pictures, particularly those of the earlier periods, are either single figures, or groups of figures with scarcely any action or mutual relation. A virgin on a throne with the infant Jesus in her arms, and one or two saints or bishops below, generally constitute the altar-pieces of the great masters of the fourteenth and of the earlier part of the fifteenth century. No story is told. Beauty, dignity, and sometimes adoration, are all that is attempted to be expressed.

But as the beauty of the human form is best displayed in movement, and that of the human countenance when under emotion, in the progress of art it became more and more common to increase the number of figures, and to engage them in some action.

A painter, however, is anxious to leave nothing to the imagination of the observers. He does not wish their attention to be diverted from the obvious beauties of the figures by having to conjecture what they may be employed on. He selects, therefore, the tritest subjects. Probably nine-tenths of the great pictures that we possess are taken from the New Testament, and more than half of the remainder from legends nearly as well known. The action in which the figures are engaged is merely a means of displaying their beauty and dignity. To this beauty

and dignity there are no bounds, except the power of the painter to conceive them, and of his colours to express them. For the purpose of contrast, or as an agent, a disagreeable object may sometimes be introduced—a cripple, for instance, who is to be healed, or an executioner; but in many of the finest pictures, every figure has as much beauty as the painter could bestow on it. The beauty may be different in kind—it may be that of age, of infancy, or of youth—it may be austere or winning, but still it is beauty. Not exceeding perhaps what nature may have produced, but exceeding all that we are accustomed to—exceeding, probably, all that the observer or even the painter has ever actually beheld. This is the *ideal* of painting. It is the human form and countenance in the utmost perfection that is conceivable. We say the human form and countenance, because, as respects brute and inanimate nature, the real excels the ideal. Titian and Raffaele could imagine and could represent beauty and grace which we have never seen embodied; but Africa has produced finer lions than Rubens, and Arabia horses superior to those of Landseer. No mind can conceive scenery more grand than that of the Andes or of the Niagara; and no pencil can paint anything that approaches to either of them.

The objects of the serious poet are to excite admiration, sympathy, and awe—awe of power, and admiration and sympathy for virtue. His instrument is for many purposes far less efficient than that of the painter. He has to paint with words. But the same words may suggest dif-

ferent images to different readers; and, in fact, it is very difficult to make words suggest any precise and vivid image at all.

When Horace says that Achilles—

> Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
> Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat armis,

we recognise an exaggeration of the character which the 'Iliad' has painted. But to one unacquainted with Homer, these words suggest nothing precise. In order to enable the reader to form distinct conceptions, the poet must set his characters in motion. He must make them speak and act. The reader must gradually become acquainted with them, as we become acquainted with real men, by hearing what they say and seeing what they do; and the more numerous and the more distinct the qualities which they display, provided those qualities be not incompatible, the more full, the more vivid, and the more individual will be the idea which the reader will gradually form for himself.

Hence arises the necessity of introducing into poetry moral evil. We have already seen that in painting, the introduction of deformity or even of imperfection is unnecessary. The painter, imitating visible objects with visible materials, always produces a definite image. He can exhibit physical beauty without action, and the action, if he chooses to represent one, may be pleasing in all its details. But the moral beauty which the poet exhibits can be shown only in a contest with evil. If he were to resolve to compose a fiction in which every agent should

be beneficent and wise, he would be stopped by the impossibility of making his characters display their wisdom or their virtue. They could not stand, like the saints in an altar-piece, admiring one another. Milton's Adam and Eve are perhaps the nearest approach to such an attempt; but even Milton could not sustain long the description of a state of innocence; and in his endeavour to represent the Deity, a Being unapproachable by evil, a Being therefore to whom the term virtuous is never applied, he has utterly failed.

The *vis motrix* of human life is evil—evil to be warded off, or to be remedied, or to be borne. In order to introduce action, therefore, the poet must introduce evil; and that evil may either be inflicted by some supernatural power—the form frequently adopted by the ancients, under the names of destiny or fate—or may arise, as is generally the case in modern fictions, from the bad passions of human nature. But some maleficent power, human or superhuman, must be employed. Moral beauty cannot be shown without the intervention of moral deformity. Without doubt some perfect characters may be introduced; or, rather, in framing and colouring his characters, the poet may omit all imperfections. So far as he paints them by description, he may describe them as possessing in its greatest excellence every quality which he ascribes to them. So far as he paints them in action, he may represent them as acting and speaking with unfailing propriety. Virgil attempted this in Æneas, Richardson in Sir Charles Grandison.

But to this there are many objections. In the first place, it offends our sense of probability. Perfect physical beauty does not produce this effect, for we have seen approaches to it; but no one has ever narrowly observed a human being without being struck by the defects and even by the positive blemishes both in his moral and in his intellectual character.

Again, such a representation is indistinct. It is like a picture without shadows. To form a vivid idea of a person, whether real or fictitious, we must see him on all sides. Perhaps the most distinct portrait ever painted by words is the Johnson of Boswell: but how vague would be our idea of him, if his weaknesses or even his positive faults had been omitted!—if he had been painted *en beau*, as the great thinker and writer and talker, the pious Christian, the man of earnest friendship and active benevolence, while his vanity, his irascibility, his indolence, his superstition, and his intolerance were all suppressed, as injurious to the harmony of the character! It is probably on account of this indistinctness, that perfect characters excite little sympathy. We are deeply interested by Dido and by Turnus, but are utterly indifferent to Æneas. *They* are real human beings; *he* is merely a virtuous phantom. We almost fancy that we have known Lovelace; we forget Sir Charles Grandison as soon as we close the book.

And lastly, the principal actors in a serious fiction must, as we have seen, be engaged in a contest with evil. If they are represented as faultless, that evil must be

menaced or inflicted by some exterior agent, since it cannot be incurred by any misconduct of their own: and if they sink in the struggle, the effect is revolting. Few can bear to read the death of Cordelia: no manager ventures to represent it. Agreeing as we do with the eloquent passage in the 'Last of the Barons,' in which Sir Edward disclaims poetical justice; admitting, as we do, that the calamities inflicted by Tragedy may far exceed, and indeed ought far to exceed, the faults of her victims, still we require that they should not be wholly undeserved. It is with great skill that Sir W. Scott, in 'Kenilworth,' has deviated from historical truth, and attributed to Amy Robsart filial disobedience; and that, in the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' he has darkened Lucy with a shade of inconstancy. These defects do not justify the sufferings by which they are punished, but they seem to account for them. This objection does not, indeed, apply, if the event be fortunate. But, in that case, it is difficult to save the plot from an artificial appearance. The heroes and heroines are shown at first in a state of prosperity. The scene darkens: misfortunes and danger, occasioned by no weakness or error of their own, surround them. But the danger rolls off, the misfortune is remedied, and they are restored to their original happiness. Even the first time that a story, constructed on this plan, is in his hands, the experienced reader sees that he is in the world of fiction. And it is still less fit for a second perusal. He knows that the lost deed is to be found, or that the rich uncle is to die in India; or, if

the scene be laid in a loftier sphere, that the supposed treason is to be disproved, that the champion of innocence is to conquer in the judicial combat, or that the crestless adventurer is to discover his royal birth.

If, then, a poet ought not to attempt to invest his heroes with an ideal character, by attributing to them no defects, can he raise them above real life, by attributing to them superhuman excellencies? As respects intellectual qualities, this is obviously impossible. His own intellectual powers are the limits to theirs. He cannot give to them more eloquence or more wisdom than he possesses himself. Without doubt he can give to them moral qualities superior to his own; but even in these we do not believe that he can describe excellence greater than has been actually attained. We cannot conceive courage more daring or more intrepid than that of Alexander or of Nelson, justice more perfect than that of Aristides, patriotism more fervent or more patient than that of Hannibal, benevolence more active or more comprehensive than that of Howard or of Wilberforce, more resolute perseverance than that of Frederic the Great, a more decided will than that of Napoleon, or more fervent or more humble piety than that of St. Paul. The heroes of fiction are less heroic than those of reality.

Superhuman bodily powers, indeed, a poet can give; and this has generally been the resource of the poets of uncivilised times. They endow their heroes with the strength of a hundred men, under the same feeling which leads the Hindoos to arm their gods with a hundred

hands. To educated readers such representations are puerile. The Knights of the Round Table, who could shatter with their maces the gates of cities, and vanquish lions in single combat, have been turned over to the nursery. They live only in Jack the Giant-killer. We tolerate, indeed, the exaggerations of Homer. We are not offended, when the Trojan army flies before the onset of Achilles. But, to a considerable extent, this is merely a poetical representation of actual facts. We know how much the efficiency of troops depends on the example and the impulse which they receive from their immediate leader. Though Rupert had little skill, his charge almost always scattered the Parliamentarians. Napoleon maintained that, if Murat had fought at Waterloo, the British squares would have been broken. The victory of Marengo is always mentioned as the work of Dessaix: the thousands who accompanied him go for nothing. A poet naturally embodies in his hero the power which he in fact exerted through the intervention of others, and ascribes to his personal prowess the results which he really produced by his influence.

If, then, a poet ought not to raise his characters above humanity by omitting their defects, if it be impossible to adorn them with virtues or powers, moral or intellectual, greater than those which are exhibited in real life, and if to attribute to them superhuman bodily force be merely puerile, in what does the Ideal in fiction consist?

We believe, as respects human characters—in nothing: for we believe that there is no such thing. We believe that it is the duty of a poet to give to his principal persons

qualities as elevated and as striking as his art will enable him to give, and to intermix with those qualities the weaknesses and faults by which the most brilliant characters quite as much as any others, perhaps more than any others, are impaired. But, in doing this, his business is with the real, not with the ideal. His combinations may be new, and the triumph of his art is to unite qualities (like those which constitute Othello) so various, so apparently opposed, and yet so consistent, that we feel their union to be possible, though we never saw it, and do not expect ever to see it. All the elements of his characters must, nevertheless, be taken from real life. If he attempt to improve human nature, the picture will be either indistinct or absurd.

Of course, much of what we have been saying is inapplicable to characters avowedly supernatural. Ariel and Undine, the White Lady in the 'Monastery,' and the Monster in 'Frankenstein,' are undoubtedly ideal: not as superior to human nature, but as differing from it. They are formed, like the Sphynx, the Centaur, or the monsters of Arabesque, out of known elements grotesquely put together, and are distinguished from real existences more by the qualities which they want than by those which they possess. When Milton wished to give a solemn picture of divine or angelic nature into which nothing fantastic could be admitted, he was forced to paint merely men. Satan and Belial, and Michael and Gabriel, and even the still higher Beings whom he has ventured to introduce, are endowed, as far as we can judge them by their actions

and their speeches, with moral and intellectual qualities of a high, but not of a superhuman excellence.

Again, a poet may obtain the ideal, by attributing to his actors qualities really incompatible with one another, or with the circumstances in which they are placed. The shepherds and rustics of Virgil and Pope and Goldsmith, unite the simplicity and content of the peasant with the refinement which belongs only to education and leisure. They are as conventional as Fauns or Satyrs. The reader returns to the 'Vicar of Wakefield' with unabated delight, though he almost knows it by heart. But charming as it is, it is rather a pastoral than an imitation of real life. Mr. Primrose and his daughters, intellectual and refined, living on 15*l.* a-year and the produce of their farm, working in the fields, and performing themselves the menial drudgery of the house, cut off from educated society, and yet happy, form a picture which is ideal, because it is impossible.

But the ideality of Sir Edward Lytton is not that of a fairy tale or of a pastoral. It is not merely different from human nature, but raised above it; and therefore, we believe, is unattainable.

We have been led into this long discussion, partly by the interest of the subject, and partly because it appears to us that Sir Edward's theories as to the ideal have injuriously affected his practice. In attempting to raise his characters above ordinary life, he sometimes ascribes to them qualities of which we doubt the real existence. Take as an example the following description of Helen in 'Lucretia:'—

There is a certain virtue within us, comprehending our subtlest and noblest emotions, which is poetry while untold, and grows pale and poor in proportion as we strain it into poems. This more spiritual sensibility dwelt in Helen, as the latent mesmerism in water, as the invisible fairy in an enchanted ring. It was an essence or divinity, shrined or shrouded in herself, which gave her more intimate and vital union with all the influences of the Universe, a companion to her loneliness, an angel hymning low to her own listening soul. This made her enjoyment of Nature, in its merest trifles, exquisite and profound: this gave to her tendencies of heart all the delicious and sportive variety love borrows from imagination; this lifted her piety above the mere forms of conventional religion, and breathed into her prayers the ecstasy of the Saints (vol. ii. p. 268).

We must say that these appear to us to be mere words.

A worse effect, because it is more diffused, of this straining at the ideal, is its influence on his language. Sir Edward Lytton, when he chooses, or rather when he does not choose to do the contrary, can write admirably. If his novels resembled his history, his pamphlets, or his speeches, they would be written in a clear, forcible, and natural style. But he often seems to think it his duty, as a poet, to clothe his thoughts in words raised above ordinary use. He has not profited by the advice given by Falstaff to Ancient Pistol, the best that ever was given to a narrator:

> If thou hast news,
> I prithee deliver them like a man of this world.

And he frequently interweaves apostrophes to the reader or to some object under description, which not only interrupt the narrative, but bring before us, what in a narrative

ought always most carefully to be kept out of sight, the author. There is a long passage in the first volume of 'Lucretia' about Moonbeam and Starbeam, beginning in page 120, and ending with 'Hide in the cloud, O Moon —shrink back, ye Stars,' in which all these affectations are combined. It might perhaps be converted into good poetry, but we must affirm it to be very bad prose.

In our detailed remarks on the novels which we are reviewing, we shall not adhere to their order of publication; but shall begin by the last two, 'Night and Morning' and 'Lucretia.' The plot of 'NIGHT and MORNING' is simple; a quality which it owes to its unity of action. A Mr. Beaufort, the heir of an ancient name and the presumptive heir of a large estate, marries a woman of a rank inferior to his own. For sixteen years, during the life of his uncle, the uncontrolled master of the property, whose prejudices would have led him to punish a mésalliance by disinheritance, the marriage is concealed: the wife does not assume her husband's name, and necessarily passes as his mistress. The two sons, Philip and Sidney, are supposed to be illegitimate. The uncle dies deceived, like the rest of the world, and leaves to Beaufort the whole property, charged only with a money legacy to Robert Beaufort, the younger brother. But a fortnight after, before he has made a will, before he has even discovered to his wife the secret repository in which the certificate of his marriage is to be found, Beaufort is thrown from his horse and killed on the spot. The wife

asserts her marriage and the children their legitimacy, but without proof. The certificate cannot be found, the Parish Register has been destroyed, the clergyman who performed the ceremony is dead, and of the two witnesses one is certainly dead, while the other has left Europe, and, even if living, cannot be heard of. Robert Beaufort, as sole heir and next of kin, takes possession of everything, and offers a trifling provision to the wife and children, which is indignantly refused.

The narrative then divides itself into two portions, each of about a year, with an interval of ten years.

During the first period of a year the mother dies broken-hearted. The eldest son, Philip, in his sixteenth year, first serves as shopman to a bookseller, a Mr. Plaskwith, whom he quits abruptly on hearing of his mother's illness.

He arrives too late at the suburban village of H—— (we presume Hornsey), where his mother has just died. Mr. Plaskwith, believing himself robbed, has pursued him, accompanied by an officer. He recognises and flies from his pursuers, comes across a stage-coach acquaintance, a William Gawtrey, an accomplished swindler, destined to act an important part in the subsequent events, escapes through his assistance, and goes in search of his younger brother, Sidney. Sidney, in his tenth year, has been received into the family of his maternal uncle, Mr. Morton, living in a town in the north of England. He is harshly treated, and the instant he sees his brother (the meeting takes place in the streets), begs to be taken away. They quit the town on foot, and after some wanderings,

Philip, under an assumed name, becomes foreman in a livery stable. Two parties are in search of the brothers,—their cousin, Arthur Beaufort, the son of their uncle Robert, and a Mr. Spencer, an old bachelor, a former admirer of their mother. Arthur Beaufort discovers Philip, but the offer of assistance only impels him to quit the town, taking with him his brother. On the second evening of their travels, Sidney becomes too fatigued to walk further. Philip leaves him on the roadside, in the hands of a passing traveller. While he runs towards a light visible at some distance to ask assistance, a carriage passes; the traveller stops it, and implores the passengers to give the boy a lift. It happens (a coincidence on which we shall have to remark hereafter) to contain Spencer. He recognises Sidney, is delighted at the opportunity of separating him from a brother whom he believed to be a *mauvais sujet*, and carries him off. Philip returns, finds his brother gone, expends all his little means in vain endeavours to recover him, and then, reduced to extremity, without money or employment, takes refuge with his only friend Gawtrey, whom, with an associate named Birnie, he finds keeping a marriage-broker's office in Paris. We shall sum up Gawtrey's previous history in his own words:—

'I have never been a murderer, or a burglar, or a highway robber, or what the world calls a thief. I can only say that I have lived upon my wits, and they have been a tolerable capital on the whole. I have been an actor, a money lender, a physician, a professor of animal magnetism (*that* was lucrative till it went out of fashion, perhaps it will come in again). I have been a

lawyer, a house-agent, a dealer in curiosities and china; I have kept a hotel; I have set up a weekly newspaper; I have seen almost every city in Europe, and made acquaintance with some of its gaols; but a man who has plenty of brains generally falls on his legs.'

The marriage-office succeeds until Gawtrey is recognised by the police, and Paris becomes a dangerous residence. They go to Tours, where Morton passes as a young heir, Gawtrey for his tutor, and Birnie as valet.

The task of maintenance fell on Gawtry, who hit off his character to a hair; larded his grave jokes with University scraps of Latin: looked big and well-fed; wore knee-breeches and a shovel-hat: and played whist with the skill of a veteran vicar. By his science in that game, he made, at first, enough, at least, to defray their weekly expenses. But by degrees, the good people of Tours, who, under pretence of health were there for economy, grew shy of so excellent a player; and though Gawtrey always swore solemnly that he played with the most scrupulous honour (an asseveration which Philip, at least, implicitly believed), and no proof to the contrary was ever detected, yet a first-rate card-player is always a suspicious character, unless the losing parties know exactly who he is. The market fell off, and Gawtrey at length thought it prudent to extend his travels.

They resume their parts in Milan, where their success, which appeared likely to be more permanent, is cut short by another recognition of Gawtrey. They return to Paris, where Gawtrey and Birnie have resources unknown to Philip. What those resources are may be suspected from the following conversation between Gawtrey and Philip, which takes place a few weeks after their return.

The house in which they lodged was in the lordly *quartier* of the Faubourg St. Germain; the neighbouring streets were

venerable with the ancient edifices of a fallen *noblesse*; but their tenement was in a narrow dingy lane, and the building itself seemed beggarly and ruinous. The apartment was in an attic on the sixth story, and the window, placed at the back of the lane, looked upon another row of houses of a better description, that communicated with one of the great streets of the *quartier*. The space between their abode and their opposite neighbours, was so narrow that the sun could scarcely pierce between. In the height of summer might be found there a perpetual shade.

The pair were seated by the window, looking at the parallel apartment in the opposite house. Gawtrey said, mutteringly,—'I wonder where Birnie has been, and why he is not returned; I grow suspicious of that man.'

'Suspicious of what?' asked Morton. 'Of his honesty? Would he rob you?'

'Rob me! Humph—perhaps. But you see I am in Paris, in spite of the hints of the police; he may denounce me.'

'It was but yesterday Birnie gave me fifty napoleons, for which he said you wished change in silver.'

'Did he? the ras— Well! and you got change for them?

'I know not why, but I refused.'

'That was right, Philip. Do nothing that man tells you.'

'Will you then trust me? You are engaged in some horrible traffic: it may be blood! I am no longer a boy—I have a will of my own—I will not be silently and blindly entrapped to perdition. If I march thither, it shall be with my own consent. Trust me, and this day, or we part to-morrow!'

'Well, then, if it must be. Sooner or later it must have been so, and I want a confidant. You are bold, and will not shrink. You desire to know my occupation—will you witness it to-night?'

'I am prepared: to-night!'

The place where the mystery of Gawtrey's business is to be revealed is a cellar, which a gang of coiners, of which he is the chief, make their workshop,—

Where, with the rapid precision of honest mechanics, the machinery of the Dark Trade went on in its several departments.

'*Courage, mes amis!*'. said Gawtrey, closing his book,—*Courage!* — a few months more, and we shall have made enough to retire upon, and enjoy ourselves for the rest of our days. Where is Birnie?'

'Did he not tell you?' said one of the artizans looking up. 'He has found out the cleverest hand in France,— the very fellow who helped Bouchard in all his five-franc pieces. He has promised to bring him to-night.'

Here the door slid back, and Birnie glided in.

'Where is your booty, *mon brave*?' said Gawtrey.

'If you mean Jacques Giraumont, he waits without. You know our rules — I cannot admit him without leave.'

'*Bon!* we give it,' said Gawtrey.

In a moment more he returned with a small man in a mechanic's *blouse*. The new comer wore the republican beard and moustache, — of a sandy grey — his hair was the same colour; and a black patch over one eye increased the ill favoured appearance of his features.—

M. Giraumont delights the coiners by some specimens of his skill.

'And now, Monsieur Giraumont,' said Gawtrey, as he took the head of the table, 'come to my right hand. A half holiday in your honour. Clear those infernal instruments; and more wine, *mes amis*!'

The party arranged themselves at the table. Among the desperate there is almost invariably a tendency to mirth. A solitary ruffian is moody, but a gang of ruffians are jolly. The coiners talked and laughed loud. Mr. Birnie, from his dogged silence, seemed apart from the rest, though in the centre. For in a noisy circle, a silent tongue builds a wall round its owner. But that respectable personage kept his furtive watch upon Giraumont and Gawtrey, who appeared talking together, very amicably, towards the bottom of the table. The younger novice of that night, equally silent, was not less watchful than Birnie. An uneasy, undefinable foreboding had come over him since the

entrance of Monsieur Giraumont; this had been increased by the manner of Mr. Gawtrey. His faculty of observation, which was very acute, had detected something false in the chief's blandness to their guest—something dangerous in the glittering eye that Gawtrey ever, as he spoke to Giraumont, bent on that person's lips as he listened to his reply. For, whenever William Gawtrey suspected a man, he watched not his eyes but his lips.

Waked from his scornful reverie, a strange spell fascinated Morton's attention to the chief and the guest, and he bent forward, with parted mouth and straining ear, to catch their conversation.

'It seems to me a little strange,' said Mr. Gawtrey, raising his voice so as to be heard by the party, 'that a coiner so dexterous as Monsieur Giraumont, should not be known to any of us except our friend Birnie.'

'Not at all,' replied Giraumont; 'I worked only with Bouchard and two others since sent to the galleys. We were but a small fraternity—everything has its commencement.'

'*C'est juste: buvez donc, cher ami!*'

The wine circulated: Gawtrey began again.

'You have had a bad accident, seemingly, Monsieur Giraumont, —how did you lose your eye?'

'In a scuffle with the *gens d'armes* the night Bouchard was taken and I escaped: such misfortunes are on the cards.'

'*C'est juste: buvez donc, Monsieur Giraumont!*'

Again there was a pause, and again Gawtrey's deep voice was heard.

'You wear a wig, I think, Monsieur Giraumont! to judge by your eyelashes your own hair has been a handsomer colour.'

'We seek disguise, not beauty, my host! and the police have sharp eyes.'

'*C'est juste, buvez donc—vieux Rénard!*—when did we two meet last?'

'Never, that I know of!'

'*Ce n'est pas vrai, buvez donc,* Monsieur Favart!'

At the sound of that name the company started in dismay and confusion, and the police officer, forgetting himself for the

moment, sprung from his seat, and put his right hand into his *blouse*.

'Ho, there!—treason!' cried Gawtrey, in a voice of thunder: and he caught the unhappy man by the throat (p. 274).

Favart, the disguised agent of the police, is killed; the coiners disperse. Through a labyrinth of cellars Gawtrey and Philip regain their attic. But in a few minutes they hear on the stairs the steps of pursuers.

At both doors now were heard the sounds of voices. 'Open in the king's name, or expect no mercy!'

'Hist!' said Gawtrey. 'One way yet—the window—the rope.'

Morton opened the casement—Gawtrey uncoiled the rope. The dawn was breaking; it was light in the streets, but all seemed quiet without. The doors reeled and shook beneath the pressure of the pursuers. Gawtrey flung the rope across the street to the opposite parapet; after two or three efforts, the grappling-hook caught firm hold—the perilous path was made.

'Go first,' said Morton; 'I will not leave you now: you will be longer getting across than I shall. I will keep guard till you are over.'

'Hark! hark!—are you mad? *You* keep guard! What is your strength to mine? Twenty men shall not move that door while my weight is against it. Quick or you destroy us both! Besides, you will hold the rope for me, it may not be strong enough for my bulk of itself. Stay! stay one moment. If you escape, and I fall—Fanny—my father, he will take care of her,—you remember—thanks! Forgive me all! Go; that's right!'

'With a firm pulse, Morton threw himself on that dreadful bridge; it swung and crackled at his weight. Shifting his grasp rapidly—holding his breath—with set teeth— with closed eyes—he moved on—he gained the parapet—he stood safe on the opposite side. And now, straining his eyes across, he saw through the open casement into the chamber he had just quitted. Gawtrey was still standing against the door to the principal staircase, for

that of the two was the weaker and the more assailed. Presently the explosion of a firearm was heard; they had shot through the panel. Gawtrey seemed wounded, for he staggered forward, and uttered a fierce cry; a moment more, and he gained the window, — he seized the rope — he hung over the tremendous depth! Morton knelt by the parapet, holding the grappling-hook in its place, with convulsive grasp, and fixing his eyes, bloodshot with fear and suspense, on the huge bulk that clung for life to that slender cord!

Gawtrey swung himself on—near—near—nearer—a yard from the parapet.

'You are saved!' cried Morton; when at that moment a volley burst from the fatal casement — the smoke rolled over both the fugitives—a groan, or rather howl, of rage, and despair, and agony, appalled even the hardiest on whose ear it came. Morton sprung to his feet, and looked below. He saw on the rugged stones, far down, a dark, formless, motionless mass — the strong man of passion and levity — the giant who had played with life and soul, as an infant with the baubles that it prizes and breaks —was what the Cæsar and the leper alike are, when all clay is without God's breath,— what glory, genius, power, and beauty would be for ever and for ever, if there were no God!

'There is another!' cried the voice of one of the pursuers. 'Fire!'

'Poor Gawtrey!' muttered Philip, 'I will fulfil your last wish;' and scarcely conscious of the bullet that whistled by him, he disappeared behind the parapet.

Philip finds an open window, passes unobserved through a garret in which the inmate is dying, descends the stairs, but as he reaches the landing-place of the first floor, sees below in the court-yard pursuers who are mounting. The ante-chamber of the first floor is open, he enters, and passes through empty rooms still lighted, till he comes to that at the end, the bedroom of the lady of the house, in

which she is sitting reposing from the fatigues of a party just broken up. This lady is Eugénie de Merville, a widow, young, beautiful, and rich. By another of the coincidences in which Sir Edward delights, they had met before, and each had been struck by the other. He announces himself as pursued, and innocent, asks refuge, and obtains it till the pursuit is over; and is then despatched by Madame de Merville to a safe retreat. On his way thither, another coincidence throws him in the path of Arthur Beaufort, returning by the morning sun from a gaming-house. Arthur watches him to his lodging, and sends him, anonymously, 4000 francs. Re-equipped as a gentleman, he returns to Mademoiselle de Merville.

And it would have been difficult to have recognised the wild and frenzied fugitive in the stately and graceful form, with its young beauty and air of well-born pride, which the next day sat by the side of Eugénie. And that day he told his sad and troubled story, and Eugénie wept; and from that day he came daily; and two weeks — happy, dreamlike, intoxicating to both — passed by; and as their last sun set, he was kneeling at her feet, and breathing to one to whom the homage of wit and genius, and complacent wealth, had hitherto been vainly proffered, the impetuous, agitated, delicious secrets of the First Love. He spoke, and rose to depart for ever—when the look and the sigh detained him.

The Fanny who engrossed the last thoughts of Gawtrey is the grand-daughter of his first love; a girl seduced from him by a Lord Lilburne, the author's type of vice, as Gawtrey is of crime. She is now seven years old, exquisitely beautiful, but defective in mind, and by the death of all her acknowledged relations had been thrown

on Gawtrey's protection. Philip, obeying his friend's last injunctions carries her to Hornsey, and leaves her with Gawtrey's aged and blind father. He returns to Paris, is presented by Madame de Merville to her circle as M. de Vaudemont, the son of an old friend, brought up in England; and he is engaged to marry her, when she dies and leaves to him the bulk of her fortune. He accepts only a portion, sufficient, however, to give him independence; and goes to India to seek fame and fortune in the service of one of the native princes.

'When from the grief that succeeded to the death of Eugénie, he woke to find himself amidst the strange faces and exciting scenes of an Oriental court, he turned with hard and disgustful contempt from Pleasure, as an infidelity to the dead. Ambition crept over him—his mind hardened, as his cheek bronzed, under those burning suns — his hardy frame, his energies prematurely awakened, his constitutional disregard to danger,— made him a brave and skilful soldier. He acquired reputation and rank. But, as time went on, the ambition took a higher flight — he felt his sphere circumscribed; the Eastern indolence that filled up the long intervals between Eastern action chafed a temper never at rest; he returned to France.

In France he obtains a commission in the Guards; but the three days of July 1830 follow, and he accompanies Charles the Tenth into exile.

These events, related as briefly as we have told them, are all that we know of his history during the ten years that follow Gawtrey's death. Sidney's story is told with equal conciseness. He is adopted by Mr. Spencer, takes his name, and grows up in contented seclusion on the banks of Windermere. In the meantime, Fanny, though

intellectually weak, rises into great beauty. She attracts Lord Lilburne's attention, and he orders her to be waylaid in the churchyard, which she frequently passes at night, and carried off. His emissary seizes her.

Still violently struggling, the girl contrived to remove the handkerchief, and once more her shriek of terror rang through the violated sanctuary.

At that instant a loud deep voice was heard, 'Who calls?' And a tall figure seemed to rise, as from the grave itself, and emerge from the shadow of the church. A moment more, and a strong gripe was laid on the shoulder of the ravisher. 'What is this? On God's ground, too! Release her, wretch!'

The man trembling, half with superstitious, half with bodily fear, let go of his captive, who fell at once at the knees of her deliverer.

The reader of 'Night and Morning' is so much accustomed to coincidences that he is not surprised to find that this deliverer is Philip, just returned from his wanderings over Europe and Asia, and brought by accident precisely to the place and at the time when his protégée requires his assistance. He establishes himself as a lodger in the house containing Fanny and the aged Gawtrey. A further coincidence brings back to England at the same time one Smith, the missing witness of the marriage between Philip's father and mother. Still he is only a single witness, old and timid, and liable to be bullied out of his consistency by an unscrupulous cross-examiner. Philip's lawyer sighs for documentary proof. Coincidences are again called on to supply it.

Lord Lilburne has succeeded, during one of Philip's absences, in getting possession of Fanny, and carrying

her to Fernside, a place formerly belonging to the elder Beaufort, and purchased with its furniture by Lord Lilburne on his death. Fanny is indignant; and Lord Lilburne, in the hope of softening her by presents, searches for some jewels in one of his repositories, a bureau, part of the old furniture: he touches accidentally a secret spring, and brings to light the following paper:—

Marriages. The year 18—.

No. 83, page 21.

Philip Beaufort, of this parish of A—, and Catherine Morton, of the parish of St. Botolph, Aldgate, London, were married in this church by banns this 12th day of November, in the year one thousand eight hundred and —, by me.

CALEB PRICE, Vicar.

This marriage was solemnized between us,

PHILIP BEAUFORT.
CATHERINE MORTON.

In the presence of
DAVID APREECE.
WILLIAM SMITH.

The above is a true copy, taken from the registry of marriages, in A— parish, this 19th day of March, 18, —by me.

MORGAN JONES, Curate of C—.

While Lord Lilburne is looking at this paper, a carriage drives up, and Robert Beaufort (who, it should be observed, is his brother-in-law) enters the room, while Fanny comes down stairs, and stands at the door an unobserved witness of what follows. Lilburne shows to him the certificate:—

Robert Beaufort glanced over the paper held out to him—dropped it on the floor—and staggered to a seat. Lilburne coolly

replaced the document in the bureau, and, limping to his brother-in-law, said with a smile,—

'But the paper is in my possession—I will not destroy it. No; I have no right to destroy it. Besides, it would be a crime; but *if I give it* you, *you* can do with it as you please.'

'O, Lilburne, spare me—spare me. I meant to be an honest man. I—I—.' And Robert Beaufort sobbed.

Lilburne looked at him in scornful surprise.

'Do not fear that *I* shall ever think worse of you; and who else will know it? Defy a single witness—entrap Vaudemont back to France, and prove him (I think *I* can prove him such—I think so—with a little money and a little pains)—prove him the accomplice of William Gawtrey, a coiner and a murderer! Pshaw! take yon paper. Do with it as you will—keep it—give it to Arthur—let Philip Vaudemont have it, and Philip Vaudemont will be rich and great, the happiest man between earth and paradise! On the other hand, come and tell me that you have lost it, or that I never gave you such a paper, or that no such paper ever existed; and Philip Vaudemont may live a pauper, and die, perhaps, a slave at the galleys! Lose it, I say—*lose it*,—and advise with me upon the rest.'

Horror-struck, bewildered, the weak man gazed upon the calm face of the Master-villain.

'I can't destroy it—I can't,' he faltered out; 'and *if* I did, out of love for Arthur,—don't talk of galleys,—of vengeance—I—I—'

'The arrears of the rents you have enjoyed will send you to gaol for your life. No, no; *don't* destroy the paper!'

Beaufort rose with a desperate effort; he moved to the bureau. Fanny's heart was in her lips;—of this long conference she had understood only the one broad point on which Lilburne had insisted with an emphasis that could have enlightened an infant; and he looked on Beaufort as an infant then. *On that paper rested Philip Vaudemont's fate—happiness if saved, ruin if destroyed.* Robert Beaufort moved to the bureau—he seized the document—he looked over it again, hurriedly, and ere Lilburne,

who by no means wished to have it destroyed in *his own* presence, was aware of his intention — he hastened with tottering steps to the hearth — averted his eyes, and cast it on the fire. At that instant something white — he scarce knew what, it seemed to him as a spirit, as a ghost — darted by him, and snatched the paper from the embers! There was a pause for the hundredth part of a moment; a gurgling sound of astonishment and horror from Beaufort — an exclamation from Lilburne — a laugh from Fanny, as, her eyes flashing light, with a proud dilatation of stature, with the paper clasped tightly to her bosom, she turned her looks of triumph from one to the other. The two men were both too amazed, at the instant, for rapid measures. But Lilburne, recovering himself first, hastened to her; she eluded his grasp — she made towards the door to the passage; when Lilburne, seriously alarmed, seized her arm —

'Foolish child!—give me that paper!'

'Never but with my life!' And Fanny's cry for help rang through the house.

But the certificate is not yet safe. A child is opposed to two men. Another coincidence is necessary:—

At that instant a rapid stride was heard without — a momentary scuffle — voices in altercation; — the door gave way, as if a battering-ram had forced it; — not so much thrown forward, as actually hurled into the room, the body of Dykeman fell heavily, like a dead man's, at the very feet of Lord Lilburne — and Philip Vaudemont stood in the doorway!

The grasp of Lilburne on Fanny's arm relaxed, and the girl, with one bound, sprung to Philip's breast. 'Here, here,' she cried; 'take it — take it!' and she thrust the paper into his hand. 'Don't let them have it — read it — see it.'

Armed with evidence, documentary as well as oral, Philip of course establishes his right. He gives up to Robert Beaufort the arrears, and the bulk of the property for his own life and for that of his son, Arthur. But

fortune, as usual, remedies this generosity. Arthur dies immediately; Robert soon after; and, when we last hear of him, Philip is in the possession of the estate and married to Fanny, whom love has endowed with intellect.

Such is a brief outline of the plot of 'Night and Morning,' which of course must not be judged by the meagre skeleton which is all that our limits can afford. In the original it is full of spirit, action, and interest, of details well conceived and admirably executed, of vivid description and acute mental analysis. And it has, as we have already remarked, the great and rare merit of unity of action. From the beginning to the end, the preservation of Philip and his restoration to the halls of his ancestors is the purpose which every incident resists or promotes, which every actor advances or retards. Even the love stories, very slight it must be admitted, which, in obedience to one of the most absurd of the many conventional laws to which fiction is subject, Sir Edward has submitted to introduce, scarcely interrupt the progress of the narrative. But this unity is purchased at a considerable sacrifice, by the omission of all details as to the events and the struggles by which the hero was transformed from a low adventurer, the companion, the dependent, and to a considerable degree the accomplice of gamblers and swindlers, into a man of spotless honour and masculine virtue. In his preface Sir Edward tells us, that his hero is an example of resolute manhood. But, in fiction as in reality, we estimate men by their actions. In the earlier portion of his life, Philip Beaufort flounders

from degradation to degradation, until he submits to act the part of an heir in order to enable Gawtrey to act that of his tutor, and to obtain access to societies, on whose spoils, obtained by play, the confederates live. At length he is saved from the galleys, not by enterprise or resolution, but by his personal beauty, which tempts a woman, ten years his senior, to fall in love with him, to decorate him with a noble name, which he usurps without scruple, and, when her death prevents their marriage, to leave him an independence.

Of his Indian life we know nothing; and when he returns, he is carried by good fortune and a clever attorney, with scarce any interference of his own, to wealth and station. What evidence is there in all this of resolute manhood? We are told that his conduct in India afforded it. But, to convince us, it ought to have been laid before us. This certainly would have interfered with the unity of action. It would have been difficult to make the utmost heroism conduce to the proof of legitimacy. We do not see how this blemish could have been avoided; but a blemish it certainly is.

Another blemish, and a more important one, we must dwell on at greater length, as it is one of Sir Edward's characteristics. It is the profuse use of coincidence. Without doubt, many important results in real life are occasioned by what we term *accident;* that is to say, they consist in the concurrence of two or more events, each arising from separate and unconnected causes. The causes which occasion a man to purchase a particular lottery ticket, and

the causes which occasion that lottery ticket to be drawn a prize, have no connection with one another. Their concurrence produce what we call the *accident* of the purchaser's gaining a prize. But, the proportion of important events accidentally produced to those of which we can trace the causes, is so small, that this occurrence always startles us. We never willingly acquiesce in it. If a man were to draw twenty times running the first prize in a lottery of ten thousand tickets, no one would believe the proofs, however powerful, that it was accidental. The improbability of such an accident would be too strong to be removed by any evidence of its having occurred. Now, several of the coincidences which we have mentioned, are as improbable as a man's drawing such a prize twenty-times running. What were the chances that Mr. Spencer's barouche should come by just when Sidney was alone and sinking from fatigue, and should carry him off?—That the room in which Philip takes refuge should be that of the only person in Paris interested in his favour?—That, after a ten years' absence from England, he should suddenly start up in the Hornsey churchyard at the instant that Fanny is there and is in danger?—That Fanny should be present when Beaufort throws the certificate on the fire?—or that Philip should rush in when it was about to be torn from her grasp?

One evil of such a system of writing is its want of plausibility. We say plausibility, not probability; because an avowed fiction never can be probable, in the strict sense of that word. Probability, as applied to past events,

implies belief, though imperfect. It differs from certainty only in degree. When we think that the chances in favour of an event's having occurred preponderate, we call it probable—when we think that there is no chance against its having occurred, we call it certain. But, as we utterly disbelieve a fiction, it is never probable. It ought, however, to be always plausible; that is to say, it ought to resemble a probable history. Every event should be preceded by a sufficient cause.

Another objection is its facility. One of the principal means by which art pleases, is its triumph over difficulty. But, if the poet be allowed to draw on the bank of chance, his resources are obviously inexhaustible.

Most of the characters of 'Night and Morning' have great merit. They are well conceived, and well executed, and remarkably well contrasted. The timid selfishness of Sidney is well opposed to the pride, boldness, and generosity of Philip; the reckless jovial rascality of Gawtrey, to the deliberate calculating wickedness of Lilburne, and to the heartless propriety of Robert Beaufort. Sir Edward may justly boast that 'avoiding all that might savour of extravagance, patiently subduing every tone and every line to the aspect of those whom we meet daily in our thoroughfares, he has shown in Robert Beaufort the man of decorous phrase and blameless action, the systematic self-server, in whom the world forgives the lack of all that is generous, warm, and noble, in order to respect passive acquiescence in methodical conventions and hollow forms.'

Arthur Beaufort is a sketch, but a very happy one, of a

young man of talents and excellent disposition, ruined by early prosperity. As is frequently the case, the character that we least approve is the heroine, Fanny. The author tells us, that he has invented her as an example of tender womanhood. But, from her first appearance until within a few weeks of the catastrophe, he has blemished her with mental imbecility; imbecility so obvious that she goes by the name of the 'idiot girl.' 'She could not,' he says, 'be taught to reason;'—

> She was like a creature to which Nature, in some cruel but bright caprice, has given all that belongs to poetry, but denied all that belongs to the common understanding necessary to mankind; or, as a fairy changeling, not indeed according to the vulgar superstition, malignant and deformed, but lovelier than the children of men, and haunted by dim and struggling associations of a gentler and fairer being, yet wholly incapable to learn the dry and hard elements which make up the knowledge of actual life (p. 309).

She has learnt nothing from books and nothing from companions. Under such circumstances, even a well-constituted brain would be tenanted by a torpid and vacant mind. What must be the case of one naturally imperfect? But as soon as she is told that her intellectual inferiority unfits her to be an object of love, her mind opens; she feels the wish and the power to acquire knowledge, and to use it, and in a few weeks the changeling becomes an intellectual woman. Love can do much, but it can no more teach an ill-organised brain to reason, than it can give strength to ill-framed limbs.

We have been tempted to give an outline of the plot of

'Night and Morning,' partly because the unity of action made it easy, and partly because we wished to afford one specimen of Sir Edward's mode of constructing a narrative.

As to the four remaining novels, we shall assume, as we safely may, that the reader is already acquainted with them, and does not require, in order to make our remarks intelligible, a recapitulation of the story.

It may be assumed, from our opening observations, that we do not join in the outcry which has been raised against 'LUCRETIA' as a tale of crime. Evil, as we have already remarked, and as Sir Edward in his 'Few Words to the Public' has more fully explained, is necessary to serious fiction; and if it be not inflicted by a supernatural power (a supposition which the modern reader does not readily admit), must arise from human wickedness or folly. If from folly, it falls within the province of Comedy; Tragedy, therefore, is necessarily thrown upon crime. Nor do we think better founded the complaint, that Lucretia affords lessons to the poisoner. It is perhaps a fault, and it is injurious to probability, that the poison supposed to be used internally, though sanctioned by tradition, is not now known to exist. The Woorali poison, immortalised by Waterton, might have been that employed in the ring; but it is so difficult to obtain it, even in South America, where it is produced, that no one need fear its employment in Europe.

What we object to in 'Lucretia,' is a quality which Sir Edward himself ascribes to it, that it is a 'painful book.'

Now, *animis natum inventumque poëma juvandis* has no right to be painful. Sir Edward asks, 'where,' if he had made it less painful, 'would have been the lessons which we can derive only from the workings of the passions and the deeps of the mind?' The obvious answer is, that it is not the business of a poet to give *lessons*. His business is to give *pleasure*. Without doubt, a true picture of life is instructive, it gives us experience without danger; but this instruction is merely incidental. It may be true that Homer—

> Quid sit rectum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
> Plenius et melius Chrysippo et Crantore monstrat;

but neither the 'Iliad' nor the 'Odyssey' show traces of any such intention. The great creator of the art of fiction, when he gave a vivid picture of human character and of the external world, and details and reality to the meagre legends which must have formed his materials, thought only of delighting his audience. If his object had been to instruct, he would not have stained his deities with the worst passions and the most contemptible weaknesses of humanity. Whenever a poet labours to be a teacher, whenever he suffers his attention to be withdrawn from its legitimate object, his work, like everything else 'contrived a double debt to pay,' attains each of its purposes imperfectly. It is this which has destroyed the popularity of Richardson and of Miss Edgeworth. The instructor is constantly peeping out. We are constantly reminded that we are reading, not a narrative of real events, but a tale

constructed for the purpose of enforcing and illustrating a precept.

Something of this fault is observable in 'Lucretia;' but, though it diminishes its interest, it is not enough, taken by itself, to render it painful. It may be worth while to examine what are the defects to which it owes this quality, —a quality opposed to the great, we might say to the only object of poetry.

The cause cannot be the mere amount of crime. There is much more crime in 'Richard the Third;' yet 'Richard the Third' was never called painful.

Perhaps something may depend on the nature of the crime which is employed. Crime, as we have already observed, is necessary to serious fiction, as a source of evil; and evil to be resisted, endured, or remedied, affords the only field in which its characters can exert their moral and intellectual force. But poison cannot be remedied, or resisted, or even consciously endured. Almost all Lucretia's victims perish without even knowing that they are attacked. They die and make no sign. The great instrument, therefore, of Tragedy,—the means by which she allures us to endure pity and terror, feelings in themselves painful, —the exhibition of the human powers, tasked to their utmost in a contest with evil, is thrown away.

A greater defect lies in the characters of the criminals. With the exception of Lucretia, their depravity is not softened by the least mixture of virtue. Dalibard, Varney, and even the subordinates, Grabman and the body snatcher, are pure villains. Such beings may, perhaps, exist: they

certainly have been employed by the greatest poets. Iago is an instance; and the Varney of 'Kenilworth.' But we believe that they are very rare in real life, and ought to be introduced into fiction with great forbearance. The criminal in whom we are interested, is one with great power for good as well as for evil; who is conquered, indeed, by temptation, but falls only after vigorous resistance; who preserves some virtues in his fall, and even then looks back with regret to those which he has lost.

Macbeth carries crime to its utmost horror. With his own hands he assassinates his guest and his benefactor; he kills the two pages by the side of their master. He procures the assassination of his friend Banquo, and regrets that Fleance has escaped. He destroys the whole family of Macduff, and at last indulges in almost indiscriminate cruelty and murder. But his conscience, though subdued, is never silenced. His first crime is preceded by a long struggle, and followed by immediate repentance. He wishes that the knocking could wake Duncan. He thinks with terror that he has

> Put rancours in the vessel of his peace,

and

> his eternal jewel
> Given to the common enemy of man.

He writhes under the feeling that in this life he has sacrificed to ambition friendship and sympathy. Even while confident of victory, he avoids Macduff, lest he should add to the blood with which he is charged; and at

the last fights only as the alternative to being baited by the rabble's curse. Such a character is Tragic. The mixture of good and evil elements renders it probable, and the contest between them renders it exciting. Wicked as they are, we never quite lose our interest in Macbeth or in his wife. The more we abhor their crimes, the more we sympathize with their remorse. Lady Macbeth, in the sleep-walking scene—and Macbeth, when he asks for a medicine to 'pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,' when he thinks with anguish, that

> That which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> He must not look to have, but in their stead
> Curses not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
> Which the poor heart would fain deny, but dare not—

are objects of greater pity than even their victims.

Even the Satan of 'Paradise Lost,' though his rebellion be an act of foul ingratitude, and his destroying the happiness of an innocent pair, in the hope of giving pain to their Creator, one of fiendish malignity, has virtues, and very high ones. Many men are more unamiable than Milton's Devil. Dalibard and Varney are merely hateful: Grabman and the resurrectionist merely disgusting. We take no interest in the proceedings or in their feelings; we do not care even about their punishment. What we wish is to hear no more about them. Hate and disgust are painful feelings, and are not willingly undergone unless some motive be held out, unless the causes which produce them are mixed with others of which the effects are agreeable.

The gratification of curiosity often leads us to submit to disgust; admiration of force or of energy may tempt us to gaze at what we hate. But, with one exception, the villains of 'Lucretia' neither excite our curiosity by their strangeness, nor our admiration by their powers. The impression, therefore, that they produce is painful; and they fill so large a portion of the work, that that character is communicated to the whole.

From this censure we except Lucretia herself. Her character is boldly conceived, and carefully and successfully executed. Sir Edward is unjust to her and to himself, when he affirms that he has given to her 'as little as imagination can conceive to redeem her guilt;' that 'he has not once held her up to compassion.' During the first part of the work, she is an object of deep compassion. She was born with high talents and strong passions. She loses her parents in infancy, and is adopted by a rich childless uncle, to whom she is one of several relations. She hears early that she is likely to be selected as his heir. This at once puts her in the situation least likely to produce a frank or an affectionate character.

The moral training even of an heir in tail to whom the inheritance sooner or later must come, is not very favourable. He often frets under the poverty of the present, and dwells on the future with an eagerness very disgusting to the person in possession. But he need not wear a perpetual mask. He need not fear an enemy and a rival in every relation, in every visitor, perhaps in every servant. He has not to combat plots and intrigues, nor to plot and

intrigue himself. He need not watch the countenance of the master of his fortunes, and assume the conduct, the opinions, and the language which suit the prejudices of his patron. He does not tremble at the thought that, if the life of the testator be prolonged, the will, which is now favourable, may be altered by the caprice or by the weakness of old age. He is not, in short, in a state of mental slavery more demoralizing even than that which principally affects the body.

Under these unfavourable circumstances, her education is abandoned to dependents. The most important of them, Dalibard, dedicates his great talents and knowledge to the sharpening her intellect and to the perversion of her feelings. He succeeds in rendering her utterly unscrupulous. He succeeds in filling her with ambition,

> The glorious fault of angels and of gods.

He nourishes in her the settled pride which, when she is injured, must turn to revenge. If selfishness had been added to these qualities, she would have been as hateful as Shakespeare's Richard. But it is not. She is capable of an ardent and pure affection. She is ambitious, but it is for her lover. Her first affection is unhappily placed. Manwaring is inferior to her in rank. Such are her uncle's prejudices that, should he suspect her love, she is ruined. Her first fault is to contract a secret engagement. Her next is, that, finding her uncle's life an obstacle, she indulges a wish for his death. The engagement and the wish are detected. She first loses the inheritance of

Laughton. The man, for whom she has lost it is irresolute and false. She detects his love for another, and instantly resigns him.

We extract a fine picture of her state of mind:

It was not the mere desolation of one whom love has abandoned and betrayed. In the abyss were mingled inextricably together, the gloom of the past and of the future;—there, the broken fortunes, the crushed ambition, the ruin of the worldly expectations long inseparable from her schemes; and amidst them, the angry shade of the more than father, whose heart she had wrung. These sacrifices to love, while love was left to her, might have haunted her at moments; but a smile, a word, a glance, banished the regret and the remorse. Now love being rased out of life, the ruins of all else loomed dismal amidst the darkness; and a voice rose up whispering, 'Lo! fool! what thou hast lost because thou didst believe and love!' And this thought grasped together the two worlds of being—the what has been and the what shall be. All hope seemed stricken from the future, as a man strikes from the calculations of his income the returns from a property irrevocably lost.

Dalibard, to whom France under the Consulate presents a field in which his powerful intellect must succeed, offers her a hand, and, as she may fairly believe, a heart. She becomes a faithful and almost an affectionate, though not a fond wife. She surrenders to him her fortune; she is a kind stepmother to his son. But he is tempted by the prospect of a brilliant second marriage. She detects his plots against her life. She finds herself under the influence of slow poison. If Dalibard lives, she must die. She engages in the dreadful strife, and becomes the survivor by betraying him to an assassin. This is her

first crime—atrocious, revolting, but palliated by the feeling of wrong and by the instinct of self-defence.

Now, in this long train of misconduct there is much ground for blame—little for sympathy, in the true sense of the word—but, at the same time, much for compassion. Lucretia, under fortunate circumstances, would have been certainly a great character—probably a virtuous one. Her misfortune—not her fault—abandoned her to mischievous influences. Neglected by her uncle, misguided by her tutor, deceived by her lover, and poisoned by her husband, she gives herself up to revenge. She is seduced into faults, and then impelled into crime. And, when once she has tasted blood, and tasted it with impunity, her courage and strength of will—admirable instruments while controlled by a sensitive conscience, but most dangerous from the moment that the moral regulator is out of order—hurry her across every obstacle towards her object, whether that object be the gratification of ambition or of vengeance, whether the obstacle be human happiness or human life. But we think it the great poetical merit of her character, though Sir Edward Lytton disclaims it, that in her worst crimes she is still an object of compassion—that she never is more to be pitied than when her conduct, if considered without reference to the training which has occasioned it, appears least to deserve our pity.

Of the remaining characters the best is that of Sir Miles St. John. It is one of the best, indeed, that Sir Edward Lytton has ever drawn. Its basis is benevolence; not the benevolence which arises from the experience of misfortune

and from sympathy with those who now feel what we have once endured, but the good nature of one on whom the world has smiled, and who smiles on it in return. Coupled with this is a strong sense of duty and of justice. It seems that nothing but good can come from a character so constituted. But he is deeply infected with the prejudices of caste. The representative of a long aristocratic line, untainted by any plebeian mixture, he believes his first duty to be the preservation of the purity of the Norman blood of the St. Johns. For this purpose he rejects domestic happiness himself. His only sister takes for her second husband a physician whose relations are in trade. He breaks off all intercourse with her, and allows her to die in poverty—poverty mainly occasioned by his hostility. Her only child by her second marriage he refuses to acknowledge as a member of his house. Her daughter by the first marriage, with a man of good family, he educates as his heir, and destines to a *mariage de convenance* with a relation of pure birth, but with a mind and body impaired by excess. He detects her engagement to a man whom he does not choose to consider as her equal, expels her from his house, reduces the splendid expectations which he had allowed her to cherish from infancy into a modest provision, and solemnly enjoins his newly-selected heir not to increase it. The perfectly natural steps by which an amiable and just man is led into all these acts of tyranny, firmly convinced in every case that he is only performing a painful duty, form a piece of high art.

Vernon is, we suspect, a favourite of the author's, but, as is frequently the case even among the children of the mind, not a very worthy one. He is rather too affected for a man of high fashion, and rather too mercenary for a man of high honour. Mr. Fielden is a composite, of which the Vicar of Wakefield and Parson Adams have contributed the materials. His conversation, and still more his letters, betray that they are copies, by an affectation of simplicity.

The characters that we like least are the hero and heroine of the latter volumes, Percival and Helen. In the first place, they are characters of description, not of action; and, as we have already remarked, such characters are always indistinct. Nor do the qualities attributed to either of them afford good materials for fiction. Helen is what the world calls a sentimental, Sir Edward a poetical, young lady. There is a letter of hers to Mr. Fielden full of fine writing. Such expressions as 'my hushed footstep,' 'my eyes suffused with sweet tears,' and 'thoughts dwarfed when they climb the highest,' do not belong to prose. Percival is merely an amiable young man; a character very agreeable in real life, but apt to be dull in a novel. He is made guilty, too, of love at first sight. Sir Edward affirms that this 'nameless and inexplicable sympathy' is a matter of common experience —that 'whatever of love sinks the deepest is felt at first sight, streams out as abrupt from the cloud, a lightning flash, a destiny revealed to us face to face.' We utterly disbelieve this. We believe that whatever of love sinks

the deepest is the result of mental and external beauties gradually perceived. Even under favourable circumstances, the admiration excited by a pretty face is a mere transient emotion. But, in the case before us, the circumstances are all unfavourable. Percival and Helen are jostled together in the streets. She loses her friends. He protects her from the crowd until she finds them again; and they separate with the following farewell, pronounced by the head of the party:—'Much obligated, and good night. I have a long journey to take to set down this here young lady, and the best thing we can do is to get home and have a refreshing cup of tea—that's my mind, Sir—excuse me.' On this introduction, knowing nothing of the girl, but that she is very pretty, and has a set of intensely vulgar associates, he falls in love.

The plot is deficient in unity; it cannot be said to have any main action. Lucretia's schemes fail. Percival and Helen are not married. The succession of events is connected only by the agency in all of Lucretia and Varney. This, however, is rather the absence of a rare merit than a positive fault. Many of our best novels are equally defective.

A more serious objection is one which we have already mentioned as characteristic of Sir Edward Lytton—the profuse use of coincidences. John Ardworth goes to India, leaving in Europe a wife, and a son whose legitimacy he falsely suspects. It is important to the story, that he should be undeceived. Therefore, 'by a strange hazard,' the priest, who confessed the wife in her last

illness in Ireland, meets with him five-and-twenty years after in Madras, and convinces him of her innocence. Percival has two cousins in London. There is no intercourse between his branch of the family and either of theirs. He does not even know of their existence. Chance brings him into contact with both of them on the same evening. One is the girl whom he falls in love with, when he encounters her in the crowd. The other is the sweeper at the next crossing, whom he sends in pursuit of the coach in which she goes home.

We cannot dismiss these two novels, the only ones among those which we review that paint modern English society, without expressing a doubt whether the vulgar life, which affords materials to a great portion of them, be a fit subject of imitation. By vulgar, of course, we do not mean humble. Humble life, simple and unaffected, is one of the best subjects of poetry. The farm-house of Dandie Dinmont, the cottage of Burns's Saturday Night, the casaccia of Lucia and of Renzo, supply delightful pictures. The vulgar life which we dislike to see selected for imitation, is that which is tainted by pretension and affectation in the middle classes, and by slang in the lowest—the vulgarity that produces snappish wives, coarse husbands, and rude children—that shows itself in the envy and the ill temper, the vanity and the affectation, which good breeding corrects, or at least conceals,—the vulgarity, in short, of the Plaskwiths, and Plimmenses, and Perkinses, and Edward Mortons, and Miverses of 'Night and Morning,' and 'Lucretia.' As any intercourse with

the originals would be simply disagreeable, no pleasure can be derived from the copies, except that which an accurate imitation affords, *as an imitation*; the pleasure which is given by L. Carracci's butcher's shop, or by an interior of D. Teniers. But, the public which Sir Edward Lytton addresses, the highly-educated classes, cannot derive this pleasure from his vulgar scenes; since they cannot tell whether the imitation be accurate or false. There is nothing which they so scrupulously and so successfully avoid, as any contact with vulgarity. The slipslop which Sir Edward put into the mouth of Mrs. Mivers, the gibberish in which Beck gabbles, may, for all that we know, be totally unlike the language of the back-parlour and of the crossing; and while that doubt continues, the imitation gives us no pleasure. A still further objection to this style of writing, is its extreme facility. To paint the manners of the highly-bred classes, to give graceful levity to their lighter hours, and show them temperate, yet not cold, when under emotion, is within Sir Edward Lytton's powers, for he has done it well, and done it frequently; but it must cost him labour. To describe folly, affectation, and rudeness, is the easiest thing in the world, if a man, to use an expression of Dr. Johnson's, will abandon his mind to it.

We now come to the author's favourite work, 'ZANONI.' We feel, however, some difficulty in criticising it, as we are not quite sure that we understand the work itself, or the principles on which it is constructed. In the following

passage, Sir Edward Lytton proposes to give us some clue to the latter:—

The curiosity, which 'Zanoni' has excited among those who think it worth while to dive into the subtler meanings they believe it intended to convey, may excuse me in adding a few words, not in explanation of its mysteries, but upon the principles which permit them. 'Zanoni' is not as some have supposed an allegory; but beneath the narrative it relates, *typical* meanings are concealed. It is to be regarded in two characters, distinct yet harmonious:—1st, That of the simple and objective fiction, in which (once granting the license of the author to select a subject which is, or appears to be, preternatural) the reader judges the writer by the usual canons, viz. by the consistency of his characters under such admitted circumstances, the interest of his story, and the coherence of his plot;—of the work regarded in this view, it is not my intention to say anything, whether in exposition of the design, or in defence of the execution. No typical meanings (which, in plain terms, are but moral suggestions, more or less numerous, more or less subtle) can afford just excuse to a writer of fiction for the errors he should avoid in the most ordinary novel. We have no right to expect the most ingenious reader to search for the inner meaning, if the obvious course of the narrative be tedious and displeasing. It is, on the contrary, in proportion as we are satisfied with the objective sense of a work of imagination, that we are inclined to search into its depths for the more secret intentions of the author. Were we not so divinely charmed with 'Faust,' and 'Hamlet,' and 'Prometheus'—so ardently carried on by the interest of the story told to the common understanding, we should trouble ourselves little with the types in each, which all of us can detect—none of us can elucidate; none elucidate, for the essence of type is mystery. We behold the figure, we cannot lift the veil. The author himself is not called upon to explain what he designed. An allegory is a personation of distinct and definite things—virtues or qualities—and the key can be given easily; but a writer who conveys typical meanings, may express them in myriads. He cannot disentangle all the lines which commingle

into the light he seeks to cast upon truth; and therefore the great masters of this enchanted soil — Fairyland of Fairyland — poetry embedded beneath poetry—wisely leave to each mind to guess at such truths as best please or instruct it (p. 435).

'Zanoni' is here declared to be typical—but what the word *type* means is not clearly expressed. In its primitive sense, a type is a mould; in a transferred sense, it is a copy, a representation. In this sense, all poetry is typical, since all poetry is an imitation of reality. In a sense still further transferred, it is a representation not direct but analogous. This is its usual meaning in theology. Many of the events in the Old Testament are in this sense typical of those of the New. The brazen serpent is typical of our Saviour, because it stood in some respects in the same relation to those who gazed on it, in which our Saviour stands to mankind. An allegory is a succession of types. *Mr. Worldly-minded* stands in the same relation to Christian, in which the cares of the world stand to us. But Sir Edward expressly distinguishes typical from allegorical meanings. Again, in one passage, typical meanings are said to be merely 'moral suggestions;' but that is not quite compatible with the statement that a type cannot be elucidated—that its essence is mystery. For unquestionably a moral suggestion can be elucidated; and, in fact, unless it can be elucidated, it is of little value. A type, again, is something which exempts an author from the liability of being called on to explain what he designed. It *never* ought to be necessary to call on an author for any explanation whatever; for nothing

ought to require explanation. But if he has been guilty of obscurity, we cannot admit that he has a right to call himself typical, and then leave us to conjecture his intentions, assuring us that 'he has thrown out meanings by myriads, and has wisely left us to guess at such truths as best please or instruct us.'

We fear that, in our ignorance as to what type may be, and consequently in what respects 'Zanôni' is typical, we must treat it as a mere novel, belonging to the *genus* supernatural. This *genus* may, we think, be conveniently divided into three species. The first comprises the fictions, in which the poet admits and uses the existing religious notions of his time and country. The second, those in which he adopts the religious notions of a former age, or, what is nearly the same thing, of a different country. The third, those in which he invents the supernatural theory which he assumes.

The early fiction of every country belongs to the first species. The poet wishes to be believed. He states, therefore, nothing that would appear to his hearers improbable. He cannot, therefore, invent a new supernatural agency, and there is no obsolete one to be revived. He uses the superstitions of his time just as he finds them, and tells nothing that he does not suppose to be capable of occurring. There are few qualities more remarkable in the 'Iliad,' than the absence of anything inconsistent with the experience of the hearers. With the exception of the conversation between Achilles and his horse, which has often been thought corrupt, and which we believe to be spurious, it contains no miracles properly so called, no

ascertainable and supernatural agency; nothing like the turning the ships of Æneas into sea nymphs, or the phantom that flies before Turnus. The theory of the author of the 'Iliad' appears to have been that which now prevails extensively in the Christian world; that of a special providence employing and directing, but not apparently altering, the laws of nature. According to that doctrine, as it is held by the majority of Protestants, the hand of God is habitually, though not visibly, interfering to protect us *from*, and at the same time *through*, the influences of the external world. If, by a sudden change of wind, a ship on a lee-shore avoids the destruction which appeared to be inevitable, the sailors thank God for their safety. If a man falls from a precipice and rises unhurt, he considers his escape providential. The Roman Catholics go further. The power and the will thus to interfere are ascribed by them, not only to the Deity but to his saints, and, above all, to the first of saints, the Holy Virgin. Every house in Catholic Germany is put under the protection of St. Florentius; every bridge under that of St. Johannes Nepomucenus. Now, this is the doctrine of the 'Iliad.' Every warrior has his patron god, as every Roman Catholic has his patron saint. Paris would have been strangled by Menelaus if the strap of his helmet had held. A Protestant might have called the giving way of the strap providential,—a Catholic might have ascribed it to the Virgin. Homer tells us that it was loosened by Venus. Teucer bends his bow against Hector,—the string breaks. Homer affirms that it was cut

by Jupiter. But he carefully avoids ascribing to his gods any visible interferences, or, to use an equivalent term, miracles. In the technical sense of the word, there is no machinery in the 'Iliad.'

This exclusion of miracles is not maintained in every part of the 'Odyssey.' The enchantments of Circe, the evocation of the dead in Egypt, the bellowing on the spits of the flesh of the oxen of the sun, the imprisonment of the winds by Æolus, and their deliverance when the sailors untie the bags, are as miraculous as any of the wonders of the 'Arabian Nights.'

It is to be observed, however, that where the author of the 'Odyssey' speaks in his own person, he confines himself to providential, as opposed to miraculous, interference. Minerva does not aid Ulysses by striking down the suitors with her spear, or by receiving their weapons in her Ægis. She merely directs her arrows and turns aside the darts of his enemies. When his ship founders she does not lift him from the water to the shore, but inspires him with strength to struggle with the waves and with presence of mind to effect a landing. The miracles are put into the mouth of Ulysses, and to Ulysses veracity is not ascribed, either in the 'Iliad' or in the 'Odyssey.' Not only where he has some purposes to serve, as in the case of Dolon, and in his first meeting with Eumœus, but even where truth would have been equally convenient, he prefers falsehood. In his introduction, for instance, to Alcinous, he gives a false account of his interview with Nausicae, though no motive for misrepresentation is suggested. In avoiding to pledge his own credit or that

of the Muse to these wonders, and in making them rest on the sole testimony of so reckless an inventor as Ulysses, Homer may have meant to insinuate that he himself disbelieved them.

The second and the third species of supernatural inventions belong to a literature which has ceased to paint exclusively what exists, or what the poet believes to exist. He does not wish to be believed. He assumes a state of of things which both he and his readers know to be impossible. This is a considerable defect. It interposes something between the original and the copy. A poem of the first species is taken from what the poet and his hearers suppose to be the real world. It is an imitation of a true story. A poem of the second or third species is an imitation of an imitation. The 'Iliad' imitates real events. The 'Æneid' imitates the 'Iliad.'

On the other hand, supernatural fictions, even when avowedly fictions, have the great advantage of gratifying our love of the marvellous,—a passion strongest, perhaps, in youth, but fortunately (for it is a great source of enjoyment) strong throughout life. When Milton provides pleasure for the old age of the Penseroso, he adds to the Tale of Troy divine,—

> The story of Cambuscan bold,
> And of the virtuous ring and glass,
> And of the wondrous horse of brass.

Besides this defect and this merit, which belong to them both, poems of the second and third species have each their peculiar inconveniences, and they have each their

peculiar advantages. A poet, who does not invent, but adopts a superstition, is not answerable for its obscurities or even for its absurdities. Virgil would have found it difficult to state clearly how the shade of Deiphobus could suffer the mutilations which had been inflicted on his body; nor could Homer have explained the relation of Jupiter to the Fates—sometimes the reluctant registrar of their decrees, sometimes apparently controlling them. The popular belief, not the poet, was answerable for these inconsistencies. On the other hand, the poet who resuscitates an expired belief, or who presents to the readers of one country the superstitions of another, though not responsible for the existence of their absurdities, is answerable for having assumed a creed which involves them. The curse of Kehama is overlaid by the follies of Hindooism. From this inconvenience the inventor of a supernatural agency is free. No absurdities are inflicted on him. But with liberty comes responsibility. He is bound to make his own creation consistent. He may leave portions of the system unrevealed, but enough must be shown to render the outline intelligible.

The great objection, however, to the resuscitation of an expired superstition, and to the introduction of a foreign one, is its liability to become trite. We are easily tired of conventional beings. The classical mythology has long been worn out. A serious fiction, assuming the truth of Paganism, would be absurd. In the last century ghosts were respectable agents. Horace Walpole and Mat. Lewis founded romances on their reality. Mrs. Ratcliffe used

them with equal profuseness, but thought herself bound to explain them away. *Now* they are scarcely admissible. Sorcery or witchcraft, in the original senses of these words, as expressing compacts by which human beings obtained the services of bad spirits at the price of salvation, were long a recognised machinery. *Now*, though they linger in versified fictions which require less credibility, they are almost banished from prose ones. The consequence has been, that nearly all the great modern writers of supernatural romances have been forced to invent their superhuman agents. To this necessity we owe the Grüne Schlange of Goethe, the White Lady of Scott, the Undine of La Motte Fouqué, and now the Zanoni of Sir Edward Lytton.

The theory of Zanoni, as far as we have been able to make it out, seems to be this: That the air is peopled with intelligent beings capable of communication with man, and able and willing, some to serve, and others to injure him—that the earth contains plants of which the juices or the gaseous particles, when applied to the human body, arrest decay, and therefore prolong life to an indefinite term, and invigorate the mental faculties, and sharpen the senses, so as to enable man to perceive the inhabitants of air—that the knowledge of these plants, of the means of communicating with the aerial powers, and of copying many of the processes of nature, such as the production of gold and of precious stones, is in the custody of a secret brotherhood, of whom, at the opening of the story, only two, Mejnour and Zanoni, are in existence, the others having,

from time to time consented to die, and those who aspired to fill their places having failed in the trial. For the initiation is slow and painful, requiring an abstraction from all violent and selfish passions, and bringing the candidate into immediate contact with a powerful and malignant being, called the Dweller of the Threshold—

> Whose form of giant mould
> No mortal eye can fixed behold.

Mejnour and Zanoni are supposed to have been initiated more than 5000 years ago; the former (who was Zanoni's teacher) in old age, the latter when young. Mejnour, therefore, remains for ever a vigorous old man. Zanoni enjoys perpetual youth. Mejnour is purely intellectual; he has no likes or dislikes, no wish to benefit or to injure, and passes his undecaying life in mere contemplation. Zanoni is capable of bodily and mental enjoyment: he can sympathise with individuals, and is privately benevolent, though he shows no wish to be publicly or extensively useful. He appears to have passed century after century in the mere pursuit of pleasure—pleasure intellectual and refined, but leading to nothing more. He has no fixed residence, no duties, and, except Mejnour, no friends; but wanders without object from country to country, and from acquaintance to acquaintance. Friendship, love, and all the other violent emotions, are forbidden to him, or must be enjoyed only at the sacrifice of some at least of his privileges: for the powers of air, themselves passionless intelligences, sympathise only with intellect, and look coldly on minds disturbed by emotion.

Though bearing a heart steeled by fifty centuries, Zanoni falls in love. His peculiar powers are impaired. His mistress, Viola, is dying. The Dweller of the Threshold offers to save her. Zanoni yields. He accepts the gifts of the evil spirit, knowing that their price is the loss of all communion with the pure inhabitants of heaven. Viola is saved from the power of disease, but only to fall into that of man. She is in Paris during the reign of terror, is imprisoned as suspected of incivicism, and is on the list of those who are to appear in the court where trial was condemnation. Zanoni, though deprived of superhuman aid, retains his sagacity and experience. He foresees that Robespierre's power is falling, and that, if she can survive the day of trial, the 10th Thermidor, she is safe, at least from legal dangers. He procures his name to be substituted for hers, is tried and executed in her place. The next day she dies of grief, terror, and exhaustion.

Such are the elements of the plot of 'Zanoni,' which consequently has the great merit of unity of action. There can scarcely be said to be any episodes; for, the abortive initiation of an Englishman named Glyndon, which approaches nearest to one, is connected with the main event. Nor is the attention diverted by many subordinate actors. Zanoni or Viola is almost always on the stage.

The supernatural descriptions and events amuse by their marvellousness, and those which imitate real life are adorned by the beauty of the natural scenery of the Mediterranean, and by the strangeness of the moral scenery of the French Revolution.

With all these merits, however, and they are great, we do not put 'Zanoni' high among Sir Edward Lytton's works. It stands ill the great test of reperusal. We read the 'Last of the Barons' with more pleasure the second time than the first; we read 'Zanoni' with less. We believe that this is partly occasioned by its general gloom. No character is introduced except to suffer. Nothing, right or wrong, that is attempted, succeeds. Glyndon gives up love that he may aspire to immortality. Instead of obtaining it, he falls into the power of a ghastly vision. To indulge his love, Zanoni surrenders a great portion of his superhuman privileges. The object of his affection deserts him. To save her from disease he forfeits more. She recovers only to fall into the hands of the revolutionary tribunal. To save her from the guillotine, he gives up his immortality. She dies broken-hearted the next day. No reader likes to recur to pictures of constant unalleviated misfortune.

Another defect appears to us to lie in the management of the machinery. We have already remarked that the inventor of a supernatural agency is bound to make it intelligible and consistent. As respects the personal qualities of Mejnour and Zanoni, this is done. Their immunity from decay, and the different effects on them in that immunity in consequence of the different ages at which they respectively attained it, are well imagined. But we cannot understand the nature of their influence on other human beings, and on the external world, or reconcile the different accounts that are given of it. Mejnour and

Zanoni both affirm that their power consists in their knowledge of means. They both disclaim miraculous power; that is to say, the power to produce effects by a mere act of volition, without any intermediate process—the power, of which 'Let there be light, and there was light,' is an example. But, when Zanoni occasions a man to win, during a whole night, at a game of pure chance; when he stakes his own mistress on a throw, knowing that at his order the dice will give him their highest number; —what are these but miracles? Mejnour upbraids a Prince in his palace; his attendants rush to seize him. In his place there is found 'only a thin and fragrant mist.' Pirates attack Zanoni's house. He does not stir from his room. They are found dead before the door without apparent injury. To make the story plausible, the means by which the latter two effects were produced should have been at least vaguely indicated. The first two are incapable of explanation.

Magic, again, is constantly disclaimed, as a vulgar, baseless superstition: 'Away,' says Zanoni, 'with your gloomy phantasies of sorcerer and demon.' Yet, what is the compact between Zanoni and the Dweller of the Threshold, but a piece of the most commonplace magic? What is Zanoni but a sorcerer, who sells himself to an evil spirit? Again, the Dweller of the Threshold is supposed to be a being of great power and of great malignity. But it does nothing more than frighten. If its malignity be great, its power must be small. It is to be observed, that Sir Edward has endowed this being with some divine

attributes, omniscience and ubiquity. It knows all that takes place, and is brooding in the Hall of the Convention at the same time that it is besetting Zanoni in Venice and Glyndon in England. This might have been avoided, if, instead of an individual, it had been made a species, consisting of millions of individuals, all hostile to man.

It is possible, however, that many of what appear to us to be defects in 'Zanoni,' may have their merit as types; or that they may be necessary as statements, or as explanations of 'the various problems in human life which it attempts to solve.'* Having already confessed our ignorance of the typical meaning of 'Zanoni,' and having now to confess that we have not found in it either the problems to which Sir Edward alludes or their solution, all that we can add is, that if we have been unjust, it has been from want, not of good-will or of diligence, but of perspicacity.

We have now reached the historical portion of our task, 'The Last Days of Pompeii,' and 'The Last of the Barons.'

Historical fictions may be divided into four species, somewhat resembling the different species of supernatural narratives. The poet may take from history the whole foundation of his work, the principal characters and principal events, as well as the scenery: or, secondly he may employ historical characters, and involve them in imaginary adventures: or, thirdly, he may invent his actors and his plot, and adapt them to the modes of thinking and acting of a past age:

* 'Last of the Barons,' Dedicatory Epistle, p. 25.

or, lastly, he may make his work a union of the first three species. He may unite in the same story real and imaginary characters, and historical and fictitious events. The last has been the more usual practice of modern writers; the first or the second was generally adopted by the earlier poets. The 'Iliad' probably belongs to the first class; the 'Odyssey' certainly belongs to the second. If the fiction be of the first species, it is subject to some of the difficulties which encumber a romance founded on a real superstition. The historical events which are perfectly suited to poetry, are but few. They are liable, therefore, to become trite. And if the poet ventures materially to alter an historical event, for the purpose either of giving novelty to a threadbare subject, or interest to one which, as it stands recorded, is not fit to be expanded into a novel, his work loses its plausibility. We know that, in a real narrative, the facts would be otherwise stated.

To avoid this difficulty and yet obtain the interest which belongs to real characters, poets have often selected the second species of fiction—have borrowed the actors but invented the action. 'Ivanhoe' is a splendid example. The poet is now master of the events. He can shape them as he pleases. But he is bound to give them a degree of plausibility, which would not be requisite if they were historical. If the 'Last of the Barons' were a pure fiction, the six months of bad weather, which detained in France Margaret's army, would shock us. But we cannot object to what we know to have taken place. Another difficulty, which only a great writer can overcome, is the

danger of offending the reader's preconceived notions. Every one has formed his own ideas as to the persons whose names and actions are familiar to him. The picture which we are content to substitute for our own must be vivid and consistent.

This difficulty is escaped, if the poet adopt the third species, and invent everything except his scenery. But he loses the interest which attaches to real persons, and the plausibility which belongs to real events. He must draw both the characters and the plot from his own resources. And he must adapt them to a state of things which he does not know from experience. His task is much more severe than that of an ordinary novelist: but, if he succeed, so is his reward. No fiction is more delightful than one which appears to make us acquainted with the details of a state of society of which we previously knew only the outline, which gives distinctness to our vague conjectures, and converts our ill-connected and inconsistent notions into a uniform and plausible whole.

The 'Last Days of Pompeii' is an example, and, we think, a successful example, of this species of fiction.

Sir Edward has, with a wise forbearance, confined his scene to Pompeii. He has given us therefore such a view of Roman life, as would be given of English life by a novel never travelling beyond the limits of Cheltenham or of Bath. The civil war, or rather the succession of civil wars, in which Otho destroyed Galba, and Vitellius Otho, and Vespasian Vitellius, is not alluded to. We hear nothing of the debates of the Senate or of the contests of

the Forum. We have merely the life of a watering place — of a 'St. Ronan's Well' of the first century. Within this narrow canvas he has contrived to crowd many of the phenomena which most strikingly distinguish that age from our own.

A large but not an excessive share is given to all that relates to the temple and to the theatre. He has shown Christianity among its early and unlettered disciples, ardent, confident, self-denying, and ascetic, rejecting all enjoyments that are mischievous, and many that are innocent—attaching importance to certain opinions not merely as true, but as in themselves meritorious; and detesting others, not merely as false, but as in themselves sinful, and believing the holders of every other faith to be the enemies of God, and unfit to be friends of His worshippers. He has shown Paganism in its old age approved of by the statesmen, enjoyed by the imaginative, but believed in only by the people.—An expansive superstition, allowing its gods to be ridiculed by poets, allegorized by philosophers, and rivalled by imported divinities; but, demanding the toleration which it offered, and looking with disgust and fear at the exclusiveness of the religion of Judea as an unaccountable perversion of the understanding, and as a new source of strife, hatred, contempt, and cruelty, added to the bitterness of human life. He has given a picture detailed and vivid, and yet not painful, of the amphitheatre; the most exciting and the most demoralizing exhibition by which human nature has ever been corrupted—an exhibition compared to which

our horse-racing is insipid, and our cock-fighting and bull-baiting and prize-ring are humane. He has given to us the interior of the dining-room, the drawing-room, the kitchen, and the tavern of antiquity, and drawn the Roman, the Greek, and the Egyptian in his lighter and in his serious hours, in trifling amusement and in passionate action.

If we have any fault to find in the general conception of this brilliant picture, it is that the dark portions predominate. With such a tremendous catastrophe as the destruction of the whole city, occupying the background—a catastrophe which the reader foreknows, of which the premonitory symptoms increase in strength and in significance every day,—we are inclined to think that the foreground ought to have been as light and as joyous as possible. Nothing is so tragic as mirth, which the reader knows to be the forerunner of terror. Sir Edward's management is different. He has so charged his foreground with horrors, that the earthquake and the volcano are a relief. Of the principal actors, only four are living, when the curtain falls; of these, two—Glaucus and Olynthus—owe their lives to the eruption, and Ione owes to it her honour and freedom. Of the others, one dies by suicide, one by the dagger, and the rest perish in the ruins of the city. During the few weeks occupied by the action, Glaucus, the hero, is three times on the brink of destruction; he lies under the dagger of an enemy, he is poisoned, he is condemned to death, and thrown to be devoured by a lion. Ione, the heroine, is saved from violence by an accident, falls again into the power of her

enemy, and resolves to escape by death. The gay, smiling Pompeii seems to be the abode of treachery, violence, and crime.

It is probable that we owe this treatment of the subject to the peculiarities of Sir Edward's genius. It is essentially tragic. He is a great master of the fierce passions, and of the violent action which they produce. But when he describes ordinary unexcited life, when he imitates foibles instead of wickedness, and sprightliness instead of virtue, he is generally heavy and yet exaggerated. We have quoted from 'Night and Morning' some splendid bits of domestic tragedy. Let the reader compare their execution with the following extract from the conversation attributed to a party of the good society of Pompeii:—

The warrior sauntered up to the ladies.

'It reconciles me to peace,' said he, 'when I see such faces.'

'Oh! you heroes are ever flatterers,' returned Fulvia, hastening to appropriate the compliment specially to herself.

'By this chain which I received from the Emperor's own hand,' replied the warrior, playing with a short chain which hung round the neck like a collar, instead of descending to the breast, according to the fashion of the peaceful. 'By this chain you wrong me! I am a blunt man—a soldier should be so.'

'How do you find the ladies of Pompeii generally?' said Julia.

'By Venus, most beautiful! They favour me a little, it is true, and that inclines my eyes to double their charms.'

'We love a warrior,' said the wife of Pansa.

'I see it; by Hercules! it is even disagreeable to be too celebrated in these cities. At Herculaneum, they climb the roof of my atrium to catch a glimpse of me through the compluvium;

the admiration of one's citizens is pleasant at first but burthensome afterwards.'

'True, true, O Vespius!' cried the poet, joining the group: 'I find it so myself.'

'You!' said the stately warrior, scanning the small form of the poet with ineffable disdain: 'In what legion have *you* served?'

'You may see my spoils, my exuviæ, in the forum itself,' returned the poet, with a significant glance at the women. 'I have been among the tent companions, the *contubernales*, of the great Mantuan himself.'

'I know no general from Mantua,' said the warrior gravely: 'What campaign have you served?'

'That of Helicon.' ...

'I never heard of it.'

'Nay, Vespius, he does but joke,' said Julia laughing.

'Joke! by Mars, am I a man to be joked?' (p. 286).

The plot is well constructed. All the important events promote or retard the main action—the marriage of Glaucus and Ione. The episodes are few, and properly subordinate. One of the most striking, is that of Lydon. Sir Edward has made less abuse than is usual to him of coincidences. But there are some flagrant ones. Nydia hears that her mistress is gone to the house of Arbaces. She anticipates danger and follows her. By a happy accident she meets in the streets Glaucus. By another piece of good fortune, they reach the house just before Ione's power to resist Arbaces has failed. Glaucus attacks him. They struggle and fall: Glaucus undermost. Arbaces raises his dagger. The death of Glaucus and the ruin of Ione seem inevitable. The accident called in to rescue them is an earthquake. Sir Edward is so pleased with

this incident, that he has repeated it. Again, at the end of the story, Arbaces attempts to seize Ione; again, Glaucus protects her. And, again, Arbaces is defeated by an earthquake. But this time, the defeat is decisive. The first earthquake shook down on him a bust, and only bruised him; the second shakes down a column, and kills him.

Among the characters, the most distinct are Nydia and Glaucus. Nydia, like Sir Walter Scott's Fenella, is borrowed from Mignon, one of the most poetical creations of its great inventor. Each is highly born and delicately nurtured, stolen in infancy from her parents, sold to a savage taskmaster, and rescued from slavery by the hero. Each repays his kindness with love—unrequited—in fact unsuspected and embittered therefore by jealousy and despondency—and each dies when that love becomes hopeless. Each has strong, but ill-regulated affections: but, as Nydia has a more important part to play, Sir Edward has given to her more knowledge and more talent than Goethe thought fit to bestow on Mignon. Her blindness is beautifully managed, never forgotten and never obtruded.

The beauty, the susceptibility of impressions, the sanguine temperament, and the easy good-nature of Glaucus, his wealth which exempts him from labour or care, and the political state of the Roman empire which excludes him from public life, have rendered him, at the opening of the story, an elegant trifler. His passion for Ione excites in him a higher class of emotions; the dangers to which

it exposes both of them, exercise and improve his natural courage. It is raised higher by some long interviews with Olynthus in the cells of the amphitheatre, and by the example of a fortitude supported by hopes unknown to heathens; and, when at length he treads the arena, he is a hero. He is one of Sir Edward's most successful characters.

We are much less pleased by Arbaces. He is a compound of great powers, moral and intellectual, and great wickedness; a union rare in real life, but trite in fiction. Apœcides and Ione have the points of resemblance and of difference, which are often found in brother and sister placed in circumstances apparently similar. Each has quick feelings and a vivid, susceptible imagination. Each can command, without exertion, a life of tranquil enjoyment. But the feelings and imagination of Apœcides deprived of the natural food of manly ambition, uneducated by rivalry, collision, or contest, unemployed in the invigorating pursuits of political or professional business, seek to vent themselves in religious excitement, and impel him first to superstition, then to scepticism, and at last to enthusiasm. Ione is equally excluded from the toils and pleasures of public life. But, the narrower field of female occupation is open to her, and she finds it sufficient. Literature and society fill her time and satisfy her desires; while she reigns in a triclinium, she has no aspirations for 'the abstruse mysteries of a diviner wisdom, the companionship of gods, or the revelations of heaven.' Had she been a man, she might have found, like Apœcides, the want of more exciting objects and of a wider sphere;

like him she might have felt that she was in a cage, and beaten herself to death against its wires.

On the first introduction of Olynthus, Sir Edward gives us a sketch of the character which he intends to draw:

> The Nazarene was one of those hardy, vigorous, and enthusiastic men, by whom God in all times has worked the revolutions of earth, and those, above all, in the establishment and in the reformation of His own religion—men who were formed to convert, because formed to endure. It is men of this mould whom nothing discourages, nothing dismays; in the fervour of belief they are inspired, and they inspire. Their reason first kindles their passion, but the passion is the instrument they use; they force themselves into men's hearts, while they appear only to appeal to their judgment (p. 18).

This bold outline is carefully filled in, and the result is a picture of great force, yet free from exaggeration. The subordinate characters, such as Medon, Burbo, Calenus, and Lydon, are vigorous sketches, and we close the 'Last days of Pompeii' with more admiration of its author, than is created by any other of his works, except 'The Last of the Barons.'

In 'THE LAST OF THE BARONS,' the persons and events are partly historical and partly invented. In a novel thus constituted, the imaginary characters cannot with propriety influence the historical events. For, as we know who really occasioned those events, the introduction of new actors destroys the plausibility of the story. When Scott attempts to raise his imaginary De Wilton, by ascribing to him the victory of Flodden Field; when he says, that

> Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,
> He was the living soul of all;

the effect is merely absurd. We ask, 'If he were the living soul of all, how came he to be unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall?' But, of course, the historical events may properly be allowed to influence the fortunes of the imaginary characters, since such events affect deeply thousands, perhaps millions, who take no part in them, who perhaps never hear of them. If, therefore, unity of action is to be preserved, either the fortunes of the imaginary characters must form the main action, in which case the historical events may properly contribute to the catastrophe, though they do not constitute it; or, the historical events forming the main action, the imaginary agents must be kept subordinate, and merely fill the background of a stage trodden in front by others.

Shakspeare adopted the latter course. In his historical plays, all the events are real; in many of them, all the persons are real: and in those in which imaginary characters are most largely introduced, such as Henry the Fourth and Henry the Fifth, nothing is done except by the real actors. In Henry the Fifth, Nym, and Pistol, and Bardolph, and Gower, and Fluellen, and Williams, merely show the humours of the camp. The same may be said of Shallow, and Silence, and Poins, and Peto. Like Mouldy, Shadow, Wart, Feeble, and Bullcalf, they are only vehicles of humour. Even Falstaff, though he fills so large a portion of the canvas, has nothing to do with the plot. He is merely an impersonation of the gay, clever, unprincipled society, in which Prince Hal trifled away his leisure. If Shakspeare had intended him to excite any

interest, he would not have contemptuously disposed of him by committing him without any pretext of law to the Fleet.

On the other hand, Sir Walter Scott has generally thrown both the main action and the main interest on his imaginary characters. The action of 'Waverley' consists in the fortunes of Waverley and Rose, Fergus and Flora. Those fortunes are decided by the historical events, and therefore there is no want of unity. If the failure of the Rebellion had been the main action, and Charles Edward had been the hero, all that relates to the Waverleys, and Bradwardines, and M'Ivors, would have been episodical. The only novel in which he has used an historical person for the heroine, and an historical event for the plot, is 'Kenilworth;' and he has given it unity, by making his imaginary persons, Varney, and Tressilian, and Wayland Smith, and Foster, produce the catastrophe. But, for this purpose, he has set at defiance all biographical and chronological truth; a management of his story which, if the events had been more notorious, would have been offensive.

In the 'Last of the Barons,' the main action, or what is intended to be the main action, is the fall of Warwick. But some of the most important characters are imaginary. Such are the Warners—Sybil being in fact the heroine. Their adventures form a Tragedy, running parallel with that of Warwick, but not affecting it; and occupying so large a portion of the interest, that the reader sometimes doubts whether Adam Warner or Warwick be the hero.

There are, in fact, two plots, so slightly connected, that either the one or the other is an episode. We do not see how this blemish could be avoided except by the suppression of Sybil. If all that relates to her were struck out, no gap would be perceptible. But this is a sacrifice to which neither the author nor the reader would consent.

There is another set of episodical agents, for whom the author might perhaps intercede, but whom every reader would most joyfully banish, the Tymbesteres. They are almost as loathsome and disgusting in poetry as they would be in reality;...and their warnings and threats, given in songs, are trite melodrama. Sir Walter Scott, who was one of the introducers of this absurdity, has much to answer for. We wish, too, that we could be allowed to turn out a few antiquated words, which add nothing to the sense and much to the stiffness of the dialogue; such as Destrier, damosel, sponsailles, certes, opine. This intermixture was also one of Sir Walter Scott's affectations; as it is impossible to render antique more than a small part of what is said, the contrast between old and modern dialects makes both appear unnatural. It is much better to use the license which Homer has given to his successors, and to assume the existence of a universal and permanent language, spoken by Trojans as well as by Greeks, by Phœnicians as well as by Italians, by the subjects of Edward the Fourth as well as by those of Queen Victoria.

But these defects are trifling foils to the beauty of the 'Last of the Barons.' It is a great epic—grand in its

conception, and vigorous in its execution. And its excellence is enhanced by the difficulties surmounted. It is no slight merit, to give a vivid representation of a state of society so different, morally, intellectually, and politically, from our own. To show Popery occupying an apparently impregnable position, but really seated over the mine which, in a period less than that of a human life, was to explode;—to show monarchy and oligarchy, each with no visible rival except the other, yet each fated to yield before the democratic and the really aristocratic forces in English Society, the forces which reside in numbers, in wealth, and in talent, as opposed to those which are given by mere birth;—to describe wealth without security, luxury without comfort, and knowledge without philosophy;—and to make nobles and burghers and peasants exhibit the habits of the fifteenth century as naturally, and express its sentiments as familiarly, as if the poet were copying contemporary models.

All this Sir Edward Lytton has done. He has given us a picture of mediæval life as graphic as if it had been painted by Scott. In Scott's hands the progress of the narrative would have been more rapid, the characters would have been expressed by fewer and bolder touches, the lighter scenes would have been more numerous and more gay; but we doubt whether the picture would have borne a greater appearance of truth. Sir Walter Scott has the masterly facility of Rubens: Sir Edward Lytton reminds us of the elaborate finishing of Hans Hemmling or Van Eyck. Both are great artists; but when we look

at the novels of Scott, we see no reason to suppose that they would have been different, if no other works of fiction had been written during the present century: in those of Sir Edward, we constantly trace the influence of Scott, and frequently that of inferior models. If we had the power of influencing men's minds, which is ascribed by him to Zanoni, we would bid him to forget all that has been written since the 'Chronicles of the Canongate.'

We have said that the 'Last of the Barons' consists of two different plots; one invented, the other historical. Each has its own set of characters; one imaginary, the other real. Among the imaginary characters we like best Adam Warner. In many respects he is original. The abstracted Student, strange to the ways of the world and unsusceptible of outward impressions, has indeed often been drawn. One of the best specimens is Cargill in 'St. Ronan's Well.' But Cargill, and all others of his class whom we recollect, have been mere bookworms devoted to study, merely as a source of amusement, or, at best, of solitary mental improvement.

Warner is a public-spirited enthusiast. He believes that it is possible to discover a power which will subdue some of the most refractory agents, and remove some of the least surmountable obstacles, which oppose the dominion of man over matter. He believes that he is on the track of this discovery, and that labour and expense are all that are necessary to attain it. He gives up to it, almost without remarking their loss, his health and his fortune. He is deeply attached to his wife and to his daughter.

He does not perceive that his wife's death is accelerated by poverty: he does not see that his daughter is pining away. The rabble hoot him as a wizard. He lives on his future fame, and does not notice them. He is asked to engage in a treasonable correspondence: a sum is offered to him, which will purchase the costly materials still wanting to his invention. Such a bribe is irresistible. He thinks only of his machine, considers the gold that is offered to him merely as a means of completing it, and the civil war and revolution which he is to promote merely as a means of obtaining that gold: and thus, from the purest desire to benefit mankind, he assists in an attempt, which cannot possibly succeed without deluging his country with blood. His intellectual character is as well marked as his moral one. Though great as a chemist, a mathematician, and a mechanist, though capable of foreseeing that, if man can create a power which will produce motion without his further intervention, the face of the world may be changed, and the cottage may enjoy comforts and even luxuries which before were unattainable in the palace—with all this intellectual force and sagacity he is not superior to the absurdest superstitions. He believes in the influence of words on inanimate matter. He trusts to a diamond, consecrated by incantations and saturated with moon-beams.

Sybil is less original than her father. Sir Edward often alludes to her as an uncommon character. Uncommon, if she had been a real person, she certainly would have been: as the number of persons in real life to whom great

excellence, moral, intellectual, and personal, can be attributed is necessarily small. But such persons form a very large class in fiction. What distinguishes her as a heroine is principally, that her qualities are displayed in action. Most heroines are passive. We are generally required to take their talents and their virtues, like their beauty, on trust,—Sybil has to act as well as to suffer. But this is a peculiarity belonging, not to the character, but to the manner in which Sir Edward has employed it.

Among the invented characters, we think that Hastings must be reckoned. Sir Edward has indeed taken from the historical Hastings the few qualities which history records —his talents, his devotion to Edward, his popularity, and his patriotism when the interest of the public did not interfere with his own. The addition of habitual melancholy, covered by a varnish of gaiety, of general contempt for mankind mitigated by kindness to individuals, and of restless pursuit of pleasure united to the indifference of satiety, forms a finely-shaded portrait, of which perhaps the defect is that it is too modern. It belongs rather to the eighteenth than to the fifteenth century: the Hastings of Shakspeare is a gay, sanguine, unscrupulous courtier—less individualised, but more probable.

Among the best of the subordinate actors in this part of the work, are Marmaduke Nevile and Friar Bungay. Each believes in the supernatural powers of Warner. But, in the undepraved mind of Nevile, this belief produces merely awe. Bungay, conscious of the purposes to which

such powers would be turned in his own hands, looks on their possessor with terror and hate. Each of them has more humour than is usual among Sir Edward's characters; the union in Bungay's person of the necromancer, the Merry Andrew, and the friar, is happily conceived and executed. So are the hardihood of Nevile and his care of his dress; his love for Sybil, and his suspicion that she has bewitched him; his loyalty to his chief and his indifference to his king. His final disappearance in Edward's triumph is well managed. To have killed him, would been an unnecessary aggravation of the gloom of the catastrophe; and he was not of sufficient importance to be marked as the only survivor of his party.

Among the historical characters, the most striking is Warwick. This was very desirable, but not easy. We have already remarked the difficulty of giving to a perfect character distinctness or interest. During the first seven books, that is to say, during more than two-thirds of the whole work, Warwick is perfect. He is wise, magnanimous, brave, affectionate, liberal, patriotic—in short, he is covered with virtues. But these virtues do not, as is usually the case, conceal the figure over which they are spread, and give us a gorgeous phantom instead of a man. He is as distinct as the mixed character of Warner or of Hastings. This is probably owing in part to the peculiarity of his position—a subject almost equal in rank and far superior in power to his king; partly to his manner, which Sir Edward with great skill has made both stately and frank; but more than all probably, to the reader's

knowledge that this moral and intellectual hero is to fall; that when the appropriate temptation comes, wisdom and public spirit and loyalty are to give way; and that, to revenge a private injury, the great statesman and patriot will attempt to change the dynasty of his country, will employ civil war and foreign intervention, and perish, as the welfare of England required him to do, in the struggle.

Edward is well painted; but the task was easier. His talents, his courage, his vigour in action, and his self-indulgence in repose—his unbounded uxoriousness united to an equally unrestrained licentiousness, which made him over and over risk his crown to please a wife, to whom he was systematically unfaithful—his cruelty, the result not of malignity, but of indifference to human suffering—his pride, and his love of popularity; all these marked and contrasted qualities were supplied by history. Sir Edward has made excellent use of excellent materials. There are few passages in fiction more happy in outline or more dramatic in detail than his attempt on Lady Anne.

The picture of Richard has little resemblance to that given by Shakspeare. The Richard of the 'Last of the Barons' is cautious and demure. His voice is sweet, his features are unchanging—his unrelenting will, his boldness, and his ambition, are all covered by a mild unobtrusive composure. The mother of Shakspeare's Richard tells him—

> Tetchy and wayward was thine infancy;
> Thy schooldays frightful, desperate, wild, and furious;

Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous;
Thine age confirmed, proud, subtle, sly, and bloody—
More mild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred.

During the period occupied by the 'Last of the Barons,' he was under twenty-one, therefore in his prime of manhood—daring, bold, and venturous, before he had learned to be subtle, sly, and bloody. But even in the latter part of his life, on which Shakspeare has most dwelt, his mildness of manner is merely comparative. It is bestowed only on those whom he wishes to deceive. His language to his enemies, and even to his friends as soon as they cease to be useful, is nothing but hatred, scorn, or defiance. It is not to a dissembler that Queen Elizabeth complains:

My Lord of Gloucester, I have too long borne
Your blunt upbraidings and your bitter scoffs.
By heaven, I will acquaint his majesty
Of these gross taunts I often have endured.
I had rather be a country servant maid
Than a great queen, with this condition,
To be so baited, scorned, and stormed at.

Now, is there any caution or reserve in his answer?

What! threat you me with telling of the king?
Tell him and spare not; look, what I have said
I will avouch in presence of the king.

His own account of himself agrees with hers:

Because I cannot flatter and speak fair,
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
I must be held a rancorous enemy!
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,
But thus his simple truth must be abused?

Even the stage direction, at the beginning of the wonderful scene from which we have taken our last three quotations, supplied by Mr. Collier's manuscript corrector, shows the bold rough exterior attributed by the early actors, probably by Burbage, to Shakspeare's Richard,

Enter Richard, stamping angrily.

Sir Edward's Richard never stamps, never is angry.

Each poet has put into the mouth of a friend of Richard's a description of his apparent character:

I think there's ne'er a man in Christendom
Can lesser hide his love or hate than he;
For by his face straight you shall know his heart.

So says Lord Hastings.

'The boy to me is a riddle,' is the result of Warwick's observation.

We do not complain of this difference. We must admit that we far prefer the Richard of Shakspeare. It is an unrivalled picture of heroic courage, self-reliance, and decision—of dissimulation cloaked by frankness—of intellectual vigour and of moral depravity. But, if Sir Edward had followed Shakspeare, his Richard would have been a copy: it is now an original.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

Vanity Fair: a Novel without a Hero — The History of Pendennis — The History of Henry Esmond, a Colonel in the Service of Her Majesty Queen Anne — The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century: a Series of Lectures.*

WE had intended to review the whole of Mr. Thackeray's writings; but when we came to examine the twelve volumes which have been poured forth from the New York Press, and considered that they were only the forerunners of the three great novels which we have placed at the head of this article, we felt that, if we attempted to criticise all, we must treat each superficially. We have resolved, therefore, to confine ourselves to the works on which Mr. Thackeray's fame really rests, and to leave 'Fitz-Boodle,' and 'Barry Lyndon,' and 'Men's Wives,' and the 'Snobs,' and the 'Yellow Plush Papers,' and the 'Prize Novelists,' and 'Mr. Brown's Letters,' and 'Mr. Titmarsh's Travels,' under the anonymous or pseudonymous veils in which their author thought fit to envelope them. We shall begin, therefore, with 'Vanity Fair.'

We cannot tell what Mr. Thackeray's genius and diligence may still have in store for us; but of their

* From the 'Edinburgh Review,' Jan. 1854.

numerous products up to the present time, 'VANITY FAIR' appears to us by far the best, the fullest of natural and amusing incident, and of characters with bold and firm outlines, and fine and consistent details. It is called 'A Novel without a Hero;' and certainly, if a hero or a heroine be a person fitted to attract the affection or to rouse the admiration of the reader, if he or she is to be reverenced or to be adored, there is none such in 'Vanity Fair.' There are, however, two marked figures which so far act the part of heroines as to be the props on which the whole tissue of the narrative is suspended, the centres which give to the plot the amount of unity which it possesses. These, of course, are Amelia and Becky. Their outward circumstances have much similarity. Each is born in middle life: they are educated at the same school; each marries, and at the same time, a military man; each loses her husband, though not by similar causes, and is left with a single boy; each struggles with poverty; and each withdraws at the end of the story in affluence. An ordinary writer would have found it difficult to keep distinct characters so similar in their fortunes. In Mr. Thackeray's hands there the resemblance ends. In every other respect they are not merely different, but contrasted. One is the impersonation of virtue without intellect, the other that of intellect without virtue. One has no head, the other no heart.

Amelia Sedley is amiable by instinct. It is her nature to love all those with whom she comes in contact, just as it is the nature of a spaniel to caress every visitor. But

her love, being founded on propinquity, not on judgment, is, like that of the spaniel, indiscriminating. She likes best those whom she has known longest,—her father, her mother, her husband, and her son,—and simply, as far as can be ascertained from their characters, *because* she has known them longest; for in themselves the first three are among the most unloveable specimens of this rich collection of deformities. The father is an ignorant vulgar stock-broker, coarse and insolent in prosperity, and utterly beaten down by adversity. There are few passages in the work more highly finished than the interview between Sedley after his bankruptcy with his old *protégé*, Captain Dobbin:—

'I am very glad to see you, Captain Dobbin, Sir,' said he, after a skulking look or two at his visitor. 'How is the worthy alderman, and my lady, your excellent mother, Sir?' He looked round at the waiter as he said, 'my lady,' as much as to say, Hark ye, John, I have friends still, and persons of rank and reputation too. 'My wife will be very happy to see her ladyship. I've a very kind letter here from your father, Sir, and beg my respectful compliments to him. Lady D——will find us in rather a smaller house than we were accustomed to receive our friends in; but it's snug, and the change of air does good to my daughter, who was suffering in town rather—you remember little Emmy, Sir?—Yes, suffering a good deal.' The old gentleman's eyes were wandering as he spoke, and he was thinking of something else, as he sate thrumming on his papers and fumbling at the worn red tape.

'You're a military man,' he went on; 'I ask you, Bill Dobbin, could any man ever have speculated upon the return of that Corsican scoundrel from Elba? When the allied sovereigns were here last year, and we gave 'em that dinner in the city, Sir, and we saw the Temple of Concord, and the fireworks, and the

Chinese bridge in St. James's Park, could any sensible man suppose that peace wasn't really concluded, after we'd actually sung *Te Deum* for it, Sir? I ask you, William, could I suppose that the Emperor of Austria was a damned traitor—a traitor, and nothing more? I don't mince words—a double-faced infernal traitor and schemer, who meant to have his son-in-law back all along. And I say that the escape of Boney from Elba was a damned imposition and plot, Sir, in which half the powers of Europe were concerned, to bring the funds down, and to ruin this country. That's why I'm here, William. That's why my name's in the Gazette. Why, Sir?—because I trusted the Emperor of Russia and the Prince Regent. Look here. Look at my papers. Look what the funds were on the 1st of March—what the French fives were when I bought for the account—and what they're at now. There was collusion, Sir, or that villain never would have escaped. Where was the English Commissioner who allowed him to get away He ought to be shot, Sir—brought to a court-martial, and shot, by Jove.'

'We're going to hunt Boney out, Sir,' Dobbin said, rather alarmed at the fury of the old man, the veins of whose forehead began to swell, and who sate drumming his papers with his clenched fist. 'We are going to hunt him out, Sir—the Duke's in Belgium already, and we expect marching orders every day.'

'Give him no quarter. Bring back the villain's head, Sir. Shoot the coward down, Sir,' Sedley roared. 'I'd enlist myself, by—; but I'm a broken old man——ruined by that damned scoundrel—and by a parcel of swindling thieves in this country whom I made, Sir, and who are rolling in their carriages now.'

Mr. Sedley is merely contemptible. His wife is equally contemptible, but, having a stronger will, is also odious. Mr. Thackeray has delightfully sketched her whole character in the scene in which she quarrels with Amelia for exclaiming that her child shall not be poisoned with Daffy's Elixir.

Mr. Thackeray adds :—

Till the termination of her natural life, this breach between Mrs. Sedley and her daughter was never thoroughly mended. The quarrel gave the elder lady numberless advantages which she did not fail to turn to account with female ingenuity and perseverance. For instance, she scarcely spoke to Amelia for many weeks afterwards. She warned the domestics not to touch the child, as Mrs. Osborne might be offended. She asked her daughter to see and satisfy herself that there was no poison prepared in the little daily messes that were concocted for Georgy. When neighbours asked after the boy's health, she referred them pointedly to Mrs. Osborne. She never ventured to ask whether the baby was well or not. *She* would not touch the child, although he was her grandson, and own precious darling, for she was not *used* to children and might kill it.

The person, however, who holds the first place in Amelia's heart is George Osborne, her husband. Mr. Thackeray has painted him at full length, with relentless truth and detail. He is first introduced to us as a young lieutenant, the accepted lover of Amelia, fond of her person, and pleased by her admiration, but ashamed of her family, and very much inclined to think that he is throwing himself away—that with his beauty and talents and expectations (his father is great in the tallow trade), he might aspire to something higher than a stock-broker's daughter. Then come three events simultaneously. He gets his company, Amelia is ruined, and she releases him from his engagement. He tries on his new uniform, and thinks it becomes him much; weeps over the trinkets and hair locket which she sends back to him; and tells Dobbin, with some despondency, that 'all is over between them.'

Dobbin, however, disapproves of his friend's easy acquiescence, carries him back to his betrothed, and never leaves him until the knot has been tied, and the new couple are on their road to Brighton.

One of the most powerful portraits in the work is that of old Osborne, George's father. If it have a defect, it is that it is too uniformly black. It is made up of arrogance, vanity, malignity, vindictiveness, ingratitude; in short, of all the bad passions and bad tendencies that are capable of coexistence. Of course he disapproves of the match, and notifies to George that he has nothing to expect, except what he cannot be deprived of, a couple of thousand pounds, his share of his mother's fortune.

These are the comments of the bridegroom in the first week of his honeymoon: —

'A pretty way you have managed the affair,' said George, looking savagely at William Dobbin. 'Look there, Dobbin,' and he flung over to the latter his parent's letter. 'A beggar, by Jove, and all in consequence of my d——d sentimentality. Why couldn't we have waited? A ball might have done for me in the course of the war, and may still, and how will Emmy be bettered by being left a beggar's widow? It was all your doing. You were never easy until you had got me married and ruined. What the deuce am I to do with two thousand pounds? Such a sum won't last two years. I've lost a hundred and forty to Crawley at cards and billiards since I've been down here. A pretty manager of a man's matters *you* are, forsooth. Do you suppose a man of my habits can live on his pay and a hundred a year? How the deuce am I to keep up my position in the world upon such a pitiful pittance? I can't change my habits. I *must* have my comforts. I wasn't brought up on porridge like Mac Whirter, or on potatoes like old O'Dowd. Do you expect my wife to take

in soldiers' washing, or ride after the regiment in a baggage waggon?'

The regiment is ordered abroad, and the scene changes to Brussels. George neglects his bride, wastes in a few weeks the little capital which was to have been her only support, tries to seduce her friend, hurries from the Duchess of Richmond's celebrated ball to Quatre Bras, and dies at Waterloo.

The amiable ridiculous character in the drama is Dobbin; and one of his absurdities is, that at first sight, and knowing that she is engaged to his friend George, he falls in love with Amelia. Year after year, during her widowhood, he urges his suit—but in vain. Her heart is filled by the recollection of 'that departed saint,' her husband. At length it suits Becky that Amelia should marry, and thus she effects her purpose.

'Listen to me, Amelia,' said Becky, marching up and down the room before the other, and surveying her with a sort of contemptuous kindness. 'I want to talk to you. You are no more fit to live in the world than a baby in arms. You must marry, or you and your precious boy will go to ruin—you must have a husband, you fool; and one of the best gentlemen I ever saw has offered to you a hundred times.'

'I tried—I tried my best, indeed I did, Rebecca,' said Amelia deprecatingly, 'but I could not forget——,' and she looked up at George's portrait.

'Could not forget him,' cried Becky; 'that selfish humbug, that low-bred cockney dandy, that padded booby, who had neither wit, nor manners, nor heart.—Why, the man would have jilted you, but that Dobbin made him keep his word. He never cared for you. He used to sneer about you to me time after time, and made love to me the week after he married you.'

'It's false! It's false!' said Amelia, starting up.

'Look there, you fool,' Becky said, still with provoking good humour, and taking a little paper out of her belt flung it into Amelia's lap. 'You know his hand-writing; he wrote that to me,—wanted me to run away with him,—gave it to me under your nose the day before he was shot,—and served him right,' Becky repeated.

Amelia, as usual, obeys, and marries Dobbin a week after.

Amelia's boy is one of the least marked characters. Indeed it is difficult to make a child attractive, except in tragedy. Mamilius, Arthur, Edward the Fifth, and his brother affect us, but it is because we contrast their happy childish prattle with the dark fate that is soon to swallow them up. If they had been destined to a long and happy life, we should have been wearied by them. Again the youth of a very remarkable man, of Rousseau, for instance, or of Southey, is instructive, both as it shows the dawn of an intellect that was to shine so brightly, and as it enables us to trace many of the moral excellences and defects of the adult to the training of the child. But this can be done only in an autobiography. Such a narrative loses its merit with its reality. Who can read the 'Emile'?

Now as little Osborne was intended for wealth and prosperity, he could not be made interesting by contrast, and Mr. Thackeray has prudently sketched him in rather indistinct colours, as a handsome, commonplace, spoiled boy, likely when he should come of age to spend a fortune, but certainly not to earn it.

Such are the objects of Amelia's affections. As to her

actions, few of them are really hers. She generally obeys, without preference and without reluctance, the impulse given to her by those immediately around her. In obedience to her parents she falls in love with George Osborne; by her father's orders she dismisses him; at her mother's bidding she resumes him. The only act in which she exhibits free-will is the surrender of her son to his grandfather. The struggle which she goes through, the feelings which alternately impel and restrain her, are described with exquisite skill.

The evils and the dangers of such a surrender were scarcely capable of exaggeration. To give up a child of ten years old to the absolute management of a stranger is a frightful risk, even if that stranger were a Fénelon. To give it up to a coarse, uneducated, violent old man; to expose it to be crushed by his tyranny, and spoiled by his indulgence; to throw into its path the temptations of both wealth and poverty, those which rouse into insolence, and those which degrade into servility—these are chances from which a sensible mother would have recoiled. No hopes of wealth or grandeur, no fears except that of absolute starvation, would have induced her to incur them.

But these are *not* the motives which influence Amelia. They do not even occur to her:—as far as the boy is concerned, she sees nothing in Mr. Osborne's offers but wealth, station, and education. Yet she rejects those offers with indignation.

She was never (says our author) seen angry but twice or thrice in her life, and it was in one of these moods that Mr.

Osborne's attorney had the good fortune to behold her. 'She rose up trembling and flushing, and tore the letter into a hundred fragments. "I take money to part from my child! Who dares insult me by proposing such a thing? Tell Mr. Osborne that it is a cowardly letter, Sir,—a cowardly letter;—I will not answer it.—I wish you good morning, Sir,"—and she bowed me out of the room like a tragedy queen,' said the lawyer who told the story.

The cause of all this anger is simply the selfish feeling that she cannot bear to lose the society of her son. Poverty, however, comes on her like an armed man; every resource fails, and she 'tries in vain to hide from herself the thought which will return to her, that she ought to part with the boy, that she is the only barrier between him and prosperity. She can't, she can't,—not now at least. Oh, it is too hard to think of and to bear.'

At length she submits. 'The sentence is passed,—the child must go from her to others,—to forget her. Her heart, her treasure,—her hope, joy, love, worship,—she must give him up.'

The boy is given over to his grandfather; but some of the evils that were to be expected do not follow. Old Osborne has become somewhat mellowed by age and infirmity. George suffers not from his severity, but from his fondness. Every stimulant is applied to his vanity, his imperiousness, and his self-indulgence. 'How he du damn and swear,' the servants say, delighted by his precocity of execration. He grows up domineering, conceited, and selfish. But the feebleness of mind which prevented his mother's anticipating these results, prevents her perceiving

them. She believes him to be perfect, or, what in her eyes is the same, to be his father over again.

The reader will have inferred, from the attention which we have paid to the character of Amelia, that we think it a creation of extraordinary skill. We do so. It appears to us to unite the two greatest merits that a fictitious character can possess,—originality and nature. And yet it is the source of one of the greatest blemishes of the work. Mr. Thackeray indulges in the bad practice of commenting on the conduct of his *dramatis personæ*. He is perpetually pointing out to us the generosity of Dobbin, the brutality of the Osbornes, the vanity of Joseph Sedley, and so on, instead of leaving us to find out their qualities from their actions. And in the course of this running commentary he keeps repeating that Amelia was adorable; that she was the idol of all who approached her, and deserved to be so; in short, that she was the perfection of womanhood. Now we will not deny that she had qualities which would make her agreeable as a plaything, and useful as a slave; but playthings or slaves are not what men look for in wives. They want partners of their cares, counsellors in their perplexities, aids in their enterprises, and companions in their pursuits. To represent a pretty face, an affectionate disposition, and a weak intellect as together constituting the most attractive of women, is a libel on both sexes.

We must now take up Amelia's pendant, Becky: the character, among all that Mr. Thackeray has drawn, which has received the most applause.

When we said that she was the impersonation of intellect without virtue, we used the word virtue in perhaps too narrow a sense, as indicating the qualities which we love, the qualities which arise from the sympathy of their possessor with others, and therefore occasion *them* to sympathise with him. Now, of these qualities Becky is devoid. She has no affection, no pity, no disinterested benevolence. She is indeed perfectly selfish. She wants all the virtues which are to be exercised for the benefit of others. She has neither justice nor veracity. She treats mankind as mankind treats the brutes, as mere sources of utility or amusement, as instruments, or playthings, or prey. But many of the self-regarding virtues she possesses in a high degree. She has great industry, prudence, decision, courage, and self-reliance. These are the qualities which, when under the direction of a powerful intellect, unbiassed by sympathies, and unrestrained by scruples, have produced many of the masters of mankind. In a higher sphere Becky might have been a Semiramis or a Catherine. As might be expected in a person of her good sense and self-control, she is mistress of the smaller virtues, good temper and good nature; she always wishes to please, because it is only by pleasing that she can subjugate. She is not resentful or spiteful, because she despises those around her too much to waste anger on them, and because she knows that petty injuries are generally repaid with interest. Her estimate of herself is not far from the truth. She is visiting at a

sober country-house, in which she formerly lived as a governess.

One day followed another, and the ladies of the house passed their life in those calm pursuits and amusements which satisfy country ladies. Rebecca sung Handel and Haydn to the family of evenings, and engaged in a large piece of worsted work, as if she had been born to the business, and as if this kind of life was to continue with her until she should sink to the grave in a polite old age, leaving regrets and a great quantity of consols behind her, —as if there were not cares and duns, schemes, shifts, and poverty waiting outside the Park gates to pounce upon her when she issued into the world again.

'It isn't difficult to be a country gentleman's wife,' Rebecca thought; 'I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand a-year. I could dawdle about in the nursery, and count the apricots on the wall. I could water plants in a green-house, and pick off dead leaves from the geraniums; I could ask old women about their rheumatisms, and order half-a-crown's worth of soup for the poor; I shouldn't miss it much out of five thousand a-year. I could go to church and keep awake in the great family pew; or go to sleep behind the curtains, and with my veil down, if I only had practice. I could pay everybody if I had but the money.'

The old haunts, the old fields and woods, the copses, ponds, and gardens, the rooms of the old house where she had spent a couple of years seven years ago, were all carefully revisited by her. She had been young then, or comparatively so, for she forgot the time when she ever *was* young,—but she remembered her thoughts and feelings seven years back, and contrasted them with those which she had at present, now that she had seen the world and lived with great people, and raised herself far beyond her original humble station.

'I have passed beyond it because I have brains,' Becky thought, 'and almost all the rest of the world are fools. I could not go back and consort with those people now, whom I used to meet in my father's studio. Lords come up to my door with stars and

garters, instead of poor artists with screws of tobacco in their pockets. I have a gentleman for my husband, and an Earl's daughter for my sister, in the very house where I was little better than a servant a few years ago. But am I much better to do now in the world than I was when I was the poor painter's daughter, and wheedled the grocer round the corner for sugar and tea? Suppose I had married Francis, who was so fond of me, I couldn't have been much poorer than I am now. Heigho! I wish I could exchange my position in society, and all my relations for a snug sum in the three per cent. consols.' For so it was that Becky felt the Vanity of human affairs, and it was in those securities that she would have liked to cast anchor.

The game which poor Becky plays is, from its outset, almost a hopeless one: it is, to rise in the world without money, or birth, or connexions, or friends. She begins it at seventeen; the orphan, penniless daughter of a drunken unsuccessful painter and a French opera girl. Received as a French teacher in Miss Pinkerton's school, bored by the pompous vanity of the mistress, the silly chat and scandal and quarrels of the girls, and the frigid, empty correctness of the governesses, she forms her habits of unsympathising self-existence. She fights her way to be a governess in Sir Pitt Crawley's family; and, by a mixture of wheedling, coaxing, flattering, and rallying (described with as much humour as it is conceived), hooks and plays with, and at length lands, her first spoil, Captain Rawdon Crawley. Her prize, however, resembles the gold paid by the magician in the Arabian nights, which turned to leaves in the receiver's purse. Crawley's aunt, disgusted by his match, burns a will under which

he was to have inherited 50,000*l.*; and Becky finds that all that she has gained is a good-natured husband overwhelmed with debt, with no property but his commission in the Life Guards, and no knowledge except of whist, piquette, and billiards. With her usual good sense, she makes the most of her unpromising cards—goes with the regiment to Brussels—turns the general commanding the division into her slave—provides victims for the admirable play of her husband—and makes him the happiest of mortals.

She had mastered this rude coarse nature, and he loved and worshipped her with all his faculties of regard and admiration. In all his life he had never been so happy as, during the past few months, his wife had made him. She had known perpetually how to divert him, and he had found his house and her society a thousand times more pleasant than any place or company which he had ever frequented from his childhood until now. And he cursed his past follies and extravagancies, and bemoaned his vast outlying debts, which must remain for ever as obstacles to prevent his wife's advance.

Rebecca always knew how to conjure away these moods of melancholy. 'Why, my stupid love,' she would say, 'we have not done with your aunt yet. If she fails us, isn't there what you call the Gazette? or, stop, when your uncle Bute's life drops, I have another scheme. The living always belonged to the youngest brother, and why shouldn't you sell out and go into the Church?' The idea of this conversion set Rawdon into roars of laughter; you might have heard the explosion through the hotel at midnight. General Tufto heard it from his quarters in the first floor; and Rebecca acted the scene with great spirit, and preached Rawdon's first sermon, to the immense delight of the General at breakfast.

The night before Quatre Bras comes. Three partings

are described. The first is that between Amelia and George Osborne.

On arriving at his quarters from the ball, George found his regimental servant already making preparations for his departure; the man had understood his signal to be still, and these arrangements were very quickly and silently made. Should he go in and wake Amelia, he thought, or leave a note for her brother to break the news of departure to her? He went to look at her once again.

She had been awake when he first entered her room, but had kept her eyes closed, so that even her wakefulness should not seem to reproach him. But when he had returned, so soon after herself, too, this timid little heart had felt more at ease, and, turning towards him as he stepped softly out of the room, she had fallen into a light sleep.

He came to the bedside, and looked at the hand, the little soft hand, lying asleep: and he bent over the pillow noiselessly towards the gentle pale face.

Two fair arms closed tenderly round his neck as he stooped down. 'I am awake, George,' the poor child said, with a sob fit to break the little heart that nestled so closely by his own. She was awake, poor soul, and to what? At that moment a bugle from the Place of Arms began sounding clearly, and was taken up through the town; and amidst the drums of the infantry, and the shrill pipes of the Scotch, the whole city awoke.

The next is between Major O'Dowd, who commands the regiment, and his wife.

'I'd like ye wake me about half an hour before the assembly beats,' the Major said to his lady. 'Call me at half-past one, Peggy, dear, and see me things is ready. May be I'll not come back to breakfast, Mrs. O'D.' With which words, the Major ceased talking and fell asleep.

'Mrs. O'Dowd, the good housewife, arrayed in curl papers and a camisole, felt that her duty was to act, and not to sleep, at this juncture. 'Time enough for that,' she said, 'when Mick's gone;'

and so she packed his travelling-valise ready for the march, brushed his cloak, his cap, and other warlike habilments, set them out in order for him; and stowed away in the cloak pockets a light package of portable refreshments, and a wicker covered flask or pocket pistol, containing near a pint of remarkably sound Cognac brandy, of which she and the Major approved very much, and as soon as the hands of the 'repayther' pointed to half-past one, and its interior arrangements (it had a tone quite equal to a cathay-dral its fair owner considered) knelled forth that fatal hour, Mrs. O'Dowd woke up her Major, and had as comfortable a cup of coffee prepared for him as any made that morning in Brussels.

Last comes that of the Crawleys.

Rebecca, as we have said, wisely determined not to give way to unavailing sentimentality on her husband's departure. She waved him an adieu from the window, and stood there for a moment looking out after he was gone. The cathedral towers and the full gables of the quaint old houses were just beginning to blush in the sunrise. There had been no rest for her that night. She was still in her pretty ball dress, her fair hair hanging somewhat out of curl on her neck, and the circles round her eyes dark with watching, 'What a fright I seem,' she said, examining herself in the glass, 'and how pale this pink makes one look!' So she divested herself of this pink raiment; in doing which a note fell out from her corsage, which she picked up with a smile, and locked into her dressing-box. And then she put her bouquet of the ball into a glass of water, and went to bed, and slept very comfortably.

The town was quite quiet when she woke up at ten o'clock, and partook of coffee, very requisite and comfortable after the exhaustion and grief of the morning's occurrences.

This meal over, she surveyed her position. Should the worst befal, all things considered, she was pretty well to do. There were her own trinkets and trousseau, in addition to those which her husband had left behind. Besides these, and the little mare,

the General, her slave and worshipper, had made her many very handsome presents, in the shape of cashmere shawls bought at the auction of a bankrupt French general's lady, and numerous tributes from the jeweller's shops, all of which betokened her admirer's taste and wealth.

Every calculation made of these valuables, Mrs. Rebecca found, not without a pungent feeling of triumph and self satisfaction, that should circumstances occur, she might reckon on six or seven hundred pounds, at the very least, to begin the world with: and she passed the morning disposing, ordering, looking out, and locking up her properties in the most agreeable manner. If this is a novel without a hero, at least let us lay claim to a heroine. No man in the British army which has marched away, not the great duke himself, could be more cool or collected in the presence of doubts and difficulties, than the indomitable little aid-de-camp's wife.

In a year or two we find Becky in London, having achieved the perilous enterprise of scaling the heights of fashion; but she finds them neither secure nor amusing.

Becky's former acquaintances hated and envied her: the poor woman herself was yawning in spirit. 'I wish I were out of it,' she said to herself. 'I would rather be a parson's wife, and teach a Sunday School, than this; or a sergeant's lady and ride in the regimental wagon; or O! how much gayer it would be to wear spangles and trousers, and dance before a booth at a fair.'

'You would do it very well,' said Lord Steyne, laughing. She used to tell the great man her *ennuis* and perplexities in her artless way—they amused him.

In her commerce with the great, our dear friend showed the same frankness which distinguished her transactions with the lowly in station. On one occasion, when out at a very fine house, Rebecca was (perhaps rather ostentatiously) holding a conversation in the French language with a celebrated tenor singer of that nation, while the Lady Grizzel Macbeth looked over her shoulder scowling at the pair.

'How very well you speak French,' Lady Grizzel said, who herself spoke the tongue in an Edinburgh accent most remarkable to hear. 'I ought to know it,' Becky modestly said, casting down her eyes. 'I taught it in a school, and my mother was a Frenchwoman.'

Lady Grizzel was won by her humility, and was mollified towards the little woman. She deplored the fatal levelling tendencies of the age, which admitted persons of all classes into the society of their superiors; but her ladyship owned, that this one at least was well behaved, and never forgot her place in life.

How the Crawleys got the money which was spent upon the entertainments with which they treated the polite world, was a mystery which gave rise to some conversation at the time, and probably added zest to these little festivities. Who knows what stories were or were not told of our dear and innocent friend. Certain it is, that if she had had all the money which she was said to have begged or borrowed or stolen, she might have capitalised and been honest for life, whereas,—but this is advancing matters. The truth is, that by economy and good management—by a sparing use of ready money, and by paying scarcely anybody—people can manage, for a time at least, to make a great show with very little means: and it is our belief, that Becky's much-talked-of parties, which were not, after all that was said, very numerous, cost this lady very little more than the wax candles which lighted the walls. Stillbrook supplied her with game and fruit in abundance. Lord Steyne's cellar was at her disposal, and that excellent nobleman's famous cooks presided over her little kitchen, or sent by my lord's order the rarest delicacies from their own. I protest it is quite shameful in the world to abuse a simple creature, as people of her time abuse Becky, and I warn the public against believing one-tenth of the stories against her.

If Becky could have changed sexes with her husband, all would have gone well. She might have canvassed a borough as a Radical, and a county as a Tory—might

have gained the ear of the House by malignity, and kept it by effrontery — might have risen into notoriety by attacking the first men of the age, and have become the leader of a party by joining one which all persons of sense had deserted. But she is a woman; she can establish herself only through her husband; and her husband has neither talents, nor knowledge, nor character. Her only resource is to treat him as damaged goods generally are treated — to export him to the colonies. It is an awful job; but her friend Lord Steyne is all-powerful. Such things, however, are not to be got for nothing, and poor Becky has only one means of paying for them.

Unhappily, on the very night that the gazette is being printed which announces that His Majesty has been pleased to appoint Colonel Crawley, C.B., to be the Governor of Coventry Island, Crawley discovers what was the nature of the contract by which his preferment was obtained. He knocks down his patron, publishes his wife's shame, separates himself from her for ever, and goes out to administer Swamp Town.

Mr. Thackeray has not made Becky's downward course as entertaining as her rise. Indeed, it was impossible. No series of events can amuse, or, what is a much easier thing, can interest, unless we can sympathise in some respects with the principal agent. Even in tragedy, the most atrocious villain is generally invested by the poet with some qualities which we admire and even love. Richard the Third, Iago, and Lovelace, perhaps the most hateful of poetical heroes, possess in the highest degree

wit, sagacity, courage, and decision. Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth from Satan. Now, in Becky's earlier career, though there was more to hate, there was much to admire, and something to like. The reader thoroughly sympathised with her scorn of fools, however highly placed; with the intrepidity with which she encountered insolence, and the dexterity with which she repelled it; with her spirit in danger, her resources in difficulty, and the gay vivacity which was spread like sunshine over her whole demeanour. He was amused even by the impudence of her vanity, and the breadth and boldness of her mendacity. It is difficult to avoid sympathising with the success of schemes so magnificently planned and so audaciously carried out. It is not Fortune alone that favours the bold. All the world follows Fortune's example.

But with her misfortunes all the charm of Becky disappears. Even Mr. Thackeray turns his back upon her. He no longer supplies her with the sagacity and presence of mind which carried her triumphantly through the storms and among the quicksands of her London life. He allows her to sink from degradation to degradation, without an effort on his part, or even on hers, to extricate her, until she loses her identity, and the brilliant Rebecca turns into a vulgar swindler. At length, he seems to relent, and to take pity on the distresses of an old acquaintance who has afforded so much amusement. He throws Amelia and her brother across her path, and gives up to her the rich Joseph as a prey. And here we think her changes ought to have ended. As the ruler, and, as

soon as the climate of Coventry Island rendered her a widow, the wife of Joseph Sedley, she might have passed the tranquil, decorous middle age to which he at length dismisses her, — 'busied in works of piety; going to church, and never without a footman; the subscriber to every charity; the fast friend of the destitute orange girl, the neglected washerwoman, and the distressed muffin-man; a patroness and stall-keeper in every benevolent bazaar in Cheltenham and Bath.' Instead of this, he blackens her with the vulgar commonplace crimes of making Sedley's will in her favour, insuring his life, and poisoning him.

This we venture to think a mistake. Comic characters are intended to amuse, not to frighten. They may be as vicious as the author pleases; they may be utterly heartless, they may swindle, they may rob; but they must not kill. The extent to which tragi-comedy is allowable may be undefined; but this we think is clear, namely, that the comedy must be an accessory to the tragedy, not the tragedy to the comedy. The intermixture of a few cheerful spots among gloomy or frightful scenes is felt as a relief. The intrusion of the terrible among gay images is an interruption. It is like a gibbet as the background of a Watteau. We are pleased to enjoy a respite from the continued contemplation of suffering or danger. We are shocked at being disturbed in our laughter by wailings and screams.

All Shakespeare's tragedies have a mixture of comedy; none of his comedies contain anything that is tragic.

Hotspur, Henry the Fifth, and Richard are tragic. Their powers for good and for evil are gigantic; the fate of kingdoms depends on them. They can afford to trifle; their wit and humour, though sometimes pushed to buffoonery, do not lower them. Richard may smile, because he can murder while he smiles. But what should we think of Shakespeare if he had made Falstaff an assassin, or had engaged Shallow, Slender, and Poins in a murderous conspiracy? Hatred is to most men a painful emotion. There are undoubtedly torpid dispositions which require strong excitement, which enjoy pictures of murderers, tyrants, and oppressors just as they enjoy the taste of garlic, and the smell of tobacco; but these coarse intellectual palates are rare. In most minds the indignation produced by the description of great crimes requires to be soothed by the exemplary punishment of the offender, or to be diverted by withdrawing from him the reader's attention, and fixing it on the heroism of the sufferer, on the courage with which he resists violence, or on the patience with which he bears it. But these are the materials of tragedy; and when they are introduced into a work of which the basis is comic, they recall us painfully from the sunny scenes among which we have been wandering to the gloomy regions of danger and endurance.

Though we have left more than half the characters in 'Vanity Fair' unnoticed, our review of it has extended to almost an unwarrantable length. Our defence is, that we have been reviewing one of the most remarkable books of this age—a work which is as sure of immortality as

ninety-nine hundredths of modern novels are sure of annihilation.

'PENDENNIS' has generally been thought inferior to 'Vanity Fair,' and we are not inclined to dispute the verdict of the public. It wants the grand historical background of 'Vanity Fair.' Mr. Thackeray never was more happily inspired than when he removed his theatre to Belgium. Every reader will admit that the events in Brussels are those which are the most strongly imprinted on his memory. Every one recollects, as well as if he had witnessed them, the perplexities of Lady Bareacres, the undaunted self-possession of Becky, and the terrors of Joseph Sedley. But it is not merely to the exquisite truth with which these scenes are imagined that they owe their apparent reality. The solid foundation of fact by which all that is invention is supported, gives to it a stability which no pure fictions can possess. We know that thousands must have been startled at their mid-day meal, like Sedley and Mrs. O'Dowd, by the dull distant mutterings of Quatre Bras. We know that tens of thousands felt Amelia's terrors when the cannon of Waterloo began to roar. Every Scotchman who visited the British Institution last year, and admired Drummond's charming picture of John Knox bringing home his second wife, felt what probability was given to its imaginary details by the curious gable ends and projecting windows and outside staircase of the still existing house at the head of the Netherbow, which the serious bridal procession is reaching.

It has been objected to the historical novel that it carries untruth on the face of it. First, because we already know all that can be known of the departed great, and feel that any additional actions or speeches must be attributed to them falsely. And secondly, because the reader has always formed to himself a conception of the language and conduct of every historical person in whom he is interested, and is disgusted when the author's conception of them differs, as it almost always must, from his own.

There is much foundation for these objections, and Mr. Thackeray, in 'Vanity Fair,' has skilfully avoided them, by excluding from his novel historical characters, though he admits historical events. He has not given us a sketch, or even a side view, of any actor in the great drama of 1815, whose name was ever heard of before. Isidor and Pauline, and the O'Dowds and Regulus, are all the delightful creations of the author. But we know that there must have been such persons in Brussels in June 1815, that they must have witnessed the wonders of that memorable month, and that they must have talked and acted in the same manner, though not quite so amusingly, as their representatives are made to do in the pages of 'Vanity Fair.' Now all this is wanting in 'Pendennis.' As far as can be inferred from any historical illusions, it might have been written at any time during the present, or indeed during the last century. The old and the young, the Londoners and the provincials, all act and talk as if the fortunes of the country had no connexion with theirs. Even the professional writers deal with politics with the impartiality

of indifference. They put one in mind of Chatterton's computation on a great man's death. 'Lost by not being able to dedicate to him, ten guineas. 'Gained by writing his life, 12*l.* Am glad he is dead, by 'thirty shillings.'

'Pendennis' is further distinguished from 'Vanity Fair' by possessing a hero. Arthur Pendennis, who fills that office, is the only child of a retired apothecary, of an old but reduced family. He loses his father at sixteen, and from that time is educated, or rather supported, under the care of a weak, affectionate mother, one of the tender, generous incapables whom Mr. Thackeray delights in painting, because he paints them well. He lives at home with her and a nominal tutor; falls in love with an actress, who jilts him when she finds that he has nothing in possession, and only 500*l.* a year in prospect; and is removed to the University, where he becomes a fast young man, runs in debt, and is plucked. He retires to his native village, lives idly with his mother and his cousin (the good heroine of the piece), after some love passages, takes refuge in the Temple as a law-student, is disgusted by the study, and adopts literature as a profession. He succeeds as a magazine writer, novelist, and minor poet; and partly as a *littérateur*, and partly through the patronage of his uncle, an antiquated beau, gets admission into the world of fashion. His mother's death puts him in possession of his patrimony, and after some more abortive love-making he marries his cousin, and settles in the country.

Along this not very interesting biography is strung a garland of portraits and incidents, conceived with Mr.

Thackeray's wonderful fertility of invention, and executed with his equally wonderful mastery of outline and colour.

One of the most amusing of these portraits is the actress, Pendennis's juvenile flame—Miss Costigan, or, to use her *nom de théâtre*, the Fotheringay. Mr. Thackeray gives to her a splendid person—after the model of Gibson's Puella Capuana, whom indeed she resembles intellectually,—industry, good sense, and good tendencies, but absolutely no imagination, and therefore the torpidity of feeling which generally follows from that defect. She has taken to the stage as the best means of supporting herself and her drunken Irish father; accepts blindly the instructions of one Bows, a clever dramatic teacher, the leader of the orchestra; practises them with unremitting diligence, and becomes, in the parts which she has thus studied, a fine actress from pure memory. The courtship is eminently entertaining; but still more so its conclusion, when Captain Costigan discovers and exposes to his daughter the real circumstances of Pendennis.

The interlocutors are the father and daughter and Bows, a hump-backed little old man, who it must be recollected, is himself in love with the Fotheringay.

'O Emilee!' cried the Captain, 'that boy whom I loved as the boy of mee bosom is only a scoundthrel, and a deceiver, mee poor girl;' and he looked in a most tragical way at Mr. Bows, opposite; who, in his turn, gazed somewhat anxiously at Miss Costigan.

'He! pooh! Sure the poor lad's as simple as a schoolboy,' she said. 'All them children write verses and nonsense.'

'He's been acting the part of a viper to this fireside, and a traitor in this familee,' cried the Captain. 'I tell ye he's no better than an impostor.'

'What has the poor fellow done, papa?' asked Emily.

'Done? he has deceived me in the most atrocious manner,' Miss Emily's papa said. 'He has trifled with your affections and outraged my own fine feelings. He has represented himself as a man of property, and it tuoruns out that he is no better than a beggar. Haven't I often told ye he had two thousand a year? He's a pauper, I tell ye, Miss Costigan: a depindent upon the bountee of his mother, a good woman, who may marry again, who's likely to live for ever, and who has but five hundred a year.'

'Milly looked very grave and thoughtful, rubbing with bread crumb a pair of ex-white satin shoës, intending to go mad upon them next Tuesday in Ophelia. 'Sure if he's no money, there's no use marrying him, papa,' she said, sententiously.

'Why did the villain say he was a man of prawpertee?' asked Costigan.

'The poor fellow always said he was poor,' answered the girl. ''Twas you would have it he was rich, papa,—and made me agree to take him.'

'He should have been explicit and told us his income, Milly,' answered the father. 'A young fellow who rides a blood mare, and makes presents of shawls and bracelets, is an impostor if he has no money.'

'And so poor Arthur has no money?' sighed out Miss Costigan, rather plaintively. 'Poor lad, he was a good lad too: wild and talking nonsense, with his verses and pothry and that, but a brave, generous boy, and indeed I liked him—and he liked me too,' she added, rather softly, and rubbed away at the shoe.

'Why don't you marry him if you like him so?' Mr. Bows said, rather savagely. 'He is not more than ten years younger than you are. His mother may relent, and you might go and live and have enough at Fairoaks Park. Why not go and be a lady? I could go on with the fiddle, and the General live on his half-pay. Why don't you marry him? You know he likes you.'

'There's others that likes me as well, Bows, that has no money, and that's old enough,' Miss Milly said.

'Yes, d—— it,' said Bows, with a bitter curse—'that are old enough and poor enough and fools enough for anything.'

'There's old fools, and young fools too. You've often said so, you silly man,' the imperious beauty said, with a conscious glance at the old gentleman. 'If Pendennis has not enough money to live upon, it's folly to talk about marrying him: and that's the long and short of it.'

The contrast between the humdrum Miss Costigan and the impassioned Fotheringay is most amusing; but in justice to the charming profession to which she belongs, we feel bound to express some doubt whether really fine acting can be the result of mere memory and unintelligent imitation. There are, indeed, great authorities in Mr. Thackeray's favour. Johnson said of Pritchard, that she was a vulgar idiot, that her playing was quite mechanical, and that she no more thought of reading the play out of which her part was taken than a shoemaker thinks of the skin out of which the piece of leather of which he is making a pair of shoes is cut. And Diderot has written an essay to prove that perfect self-possession and cold insensibility to the emotions which he represents are essential to a great actor. 'Such an actor' he says 'is the same in every representation, and always equally perfect. All is prepared, all is learned by heart. His passion has its beginning, its middle, and its end. The same accents, the same positions, the same gestures are repeated. If there be any difference, the last representation, being the most studied, is the best. 'You ask me,' he continues, 'whether these plaintive tones, these half-stifled sobs, in which a despairing mother seems to pour forth her inmost soul, can be the result of no real emotion? Unquestionably, I answer; and the proof is, that they form part of a

system of declamation—that they have been elaborated by long study—that to be properly uttered they have been repeated a hundred times—that every time the actor listened to his own voice—that he is listening to it now—and that his skill consists, not in feeling an emotion, but in imitating its external signs. Those screams of grief are noted in his memory: those gestures of despair have been laboriously prepared. He has fixed in his own mind the precise time when he is to weep. This trembling voice, these half-uttered, half-stifled words, these quivering limbs, these trembling knees—all is pure memory, a lesson carefully learned and accurately repeated; a sublime deception, which the actor knows to be a deception while he is executing it; which wearies his body, but does not disturb his mind.'—*Correspondance Littéraire de Grimm et Diderot*, Oct. 1770.

It must be remembered, however, that a French tragedy differs essentially from the dramatic representation which goes by that name in England. So much so, that in the essay from which we have been quoting, Diderot admits that a man who can act Shakespeare perfectly, is in all probability absolutely incapable of rendering Racine, 'ne sait pas le premier mot de la déclamation d'une scène de Racine.' It is probable that things so different as French and English acting may require different habits of mind, and different modes of study and execution; and that the long tirades of Phédre may be best declaimed by an actor who is really indifferent, and merely simulates passion, while the rapid natural dialogue of Shakespeare must be felt

in order to be adequately expressed. And without absolutely denying the possibility of the mechanical acting of Pritchard and Miss Costigan, we must affirm also the compatibility of the deepest real emotion with the most vivid representation of it. Every one who had the happiness to be in the stage box when Jenny Lind pulled to pieces the violets in the Sonnambula, saw real tears running down her cheeks. And it is known that she declared that when on the stage she never saw the audience, and that if she ever thought of their presence it spoiled the truth of her acting. All the great performers that occur to our recollection have enjoyed the dangerous privileges, and have been subject to the painful joys, of the poetic temperament.

One of the most finished portraits is that of the gentlemanlike parasite Major Pendennis. Perhaps we ought rather to call him a tuft-hunter than a parasite. That word is generally used to signify a man who fawns on the rich for subsistence. Now this Major Pendennis does not. His object is not a subsistence, the means which he uses are not fawning, nor is mere money the object of his adoration. He despises vulgar untitled opulence as much as he does vulgar untitled genius. His idol is not wealth, but fashion. To a certain extent his worship is disinterested; that is to say, it is paid to his patrons for their own sakes. He desires from them no favour except to be received into their society. He suns himself in the eyes of a man of fashion like a lover in those of his mistress. This state of feeling, familiar as it is to us,

seems to have been unknown to the Greeks and to the Romans. The classical parasite was in search of something solid. He cringed for a dinner or a sportula, and cared little for the degradation by which he obtained them. Gross flattery was his readiest instrument, and as that was most palatable to the vulgarest minds, the vulgarest of the rich were those to whom he was most desirous to pay court.

The objects of the modern tuft-hunter are less substantial. The values for which he barters his independence are, to use the language of political economy, immaterial. Familiarity with the great is, with him, not the means but the end. All that he asks from them is their acquaintance. All the use that he makes of the acquaintance of one is to serve as a passport to that of another. In a society so vast and so changing as that of the English aristocracy, this pursuit, when adopted by a man who begins from the bottom, has the great advantage of being inexhaustible. He may grow old, as Major Pendennis does, in a constant process of climbing and balancing himself; sometimes rising a little higher, sometimes falling a little back; one day making good a lodgment in a new great house, another day losing a valuable *entrée* by the death, or the ruin, or the caprice of the governor of the fortress—until at length he closes a long life, diligently and successfully employed, without a friend or even an intimate, without having done anything or written anything, or said anything that can be remembered, but the undoubted possessor of a visiting list great in its quantity and irreproachable in its quality.

At the same time it must be allowed that a successful tufthunter cannot be a commonplace man,

Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est.

As he succeeds by pleasing, he must possess the arts of pleasing. And as he has to exercise them upon persons whom familiarity with the most cultivated society has rendered fastidious, he must possess those arts in an eminent degree. He must have good manners and considerable education; he must talk well and listen well. He must enjoy a good temper, or be able to control a bad one. All these qualities Mr. Thackeray has given to the Major, and he has added to them courage, decision, presence of mind, and sagacity. And yet Major Pendennis does not obtain, and is not intended to obtain, our esteem. The frivolousness of the purposes for which they are employed, makes his talents and even his virtues contemptible. The reader cannot respect a man who does not respect himself, whose self-esteem depends altogether on the verdict of others, who is content to shine with borrowed light and to be splendid in borrowed plumes.

Mr. Thackeray has usually two heroines, a good one and a bad one; one to refuse the hero, the other to marry him. The bad heroine of 'Pendennis,' Miss Blanche Amory, is a picture of great merit, even taken alone, but still more when compared and contrasted with her predecessor, Becky Sharp. At first sight the features appear to be the same. Both are utterly heartless, both are utterly unscrupulous. The ruling passion of each is vanity, and each pursues her

objects without the slighest regard to the rights, or the wishes, or the feelings of any one else. Each is clever and accomplished. They look, in short, at a distance, like twins. And yet, when we come to examine the details of the conduct of each of them, we find them not merely dissimilar but contrasted.

Becky is a universal favourite; Blanche is uniformly detested. Becky is frank and simple: Blanche is a lump of affectation. Becky's subjects are faithful to her; Blanche's victims take the first opportunity of escaping from her. The seminal difference—the seed from which all the minor differences spring—is this: Mr. Thackeray has infused a strong dose of common sense into Becky, and a strong dose of folly into Blanche. Each is fond of power. Becky obtains her influence by the slow, sure process of being useful and agreeable. She seduces Miss Crawley, the rich woman of the world, by flattery and wit; old Sir Pitt Crawley, her brother, the bearish, loutish, country squire, by entering into all his schemes, correcting his blunders, and managing his whole household. When she quits him for a short visit to his sister, he follows to implore her immediate return. 'I want you,' he says. 'I can't git on without you. I did'nt see what it was till you went away. The house all goes wrong. It's not the same place. All my accounts has got muddled agin. You must come back. Do come back! dear Becky, do come!' The female favourite of the father is seldom that of the son; but she subjugates Sir Pitt the Second as effectually as Sir Pitt the First. She reveals to him the secret of his

own talents and virtues; proves to him that he has undervalued himself, and is still more undervalued by his wife; and sends him home, after every visit, thinking to himself how much she admires him, and how much he deserves to be admired.

Such are the tactics of Becky. Blanche obtains her power by the coarse and easy instrument of fear. She domineers by teasing and frightening. Her *modus operandi* is well explained in an early dialogue between Sir Francis Clavering (her step-father) and Captain Strong, his resident companion and man of business.

'I say, Strong,' one day the Baronet said, as the pair were conversing after dinner over the billiard table, and that great unbosomer of secrets, a segar; 'I say, Strong, I wish your wife was dead.'

'So do I—That's a cannon, by Jove—But she won't; she'll live for ever—you see if she don't. Why do you wish her off the hooks, Frank, my boy?' asked Captain Strong.

'Because then you might marry Missy. She ain't bad looking. She'll have ten thousand, and that's a good bit of money for such a poor devil as you,' drawled out the other gentleman. 'And gad, Strong, I hate her worse and worse every day. I can't stand her, Strong; by gad I can't.'

'I wouldn't take her at twice the figure,' Captain Strong said, laughing. 'I never saw such a little devil in my life.'

'I should like to poison her,' said the sententious Baronet; 'by Jove I should.'

'Why, what has she been at now?' asked his friend.

'Nothing particular,' answered Sir Francis; 'only her old tricks. That girl has such a knack of making everybody miserable, that hang me it's quite surprising. Last night she sent the governess crying away from the dinner table. After-

wards, as I was passing Frank's room, I heard the poor little beggar howling in the dark, and found his sister had been frightening his soul out of his body, by telling him stories about the ghost that's in the house. At lunch she gave my lady a turn; and though my wife's a fool, she's a good soul—I'm hanged if she ain't.'

'What did Missy do to her?' Strong asked.

'Why hang me, if she did'nt begin talking about the late Amory, my predecessor,' the Baronet said with a grin. 'She got some picture out of the Keepsake, and said she was sure it was like her dear father. She wanted to know where her father's grave was. Hang her father! Whenever Miss Amory talks about him, Lady Clavering always bursts out crying: and the little devil will talk about him in order to spite her mother. To-day when she began, I got in a confounded rage, said I was her father, and—and that sort of thing; and then, Sir, she took a shy at me.'

'And what did she say about you, Frank?' Mr. Strong, still laughing, inquired of his friend and patron.

'Gad, she said I wasn't her father; that I wasn't fit to comprehend her; that her father must have been a man of genius, and fine feelings, and that sort of thing: whereas I had married her mother for money.'

'Well, didn't you?' asked Strong.

'It don't make it any the pleasanter to hear because it's true, don't you know?' Sir Francis Clavering answered. 'I ain't a literary man and that; but I ain't such a fool as she makes me out. I don't know how it is, but she always manages to—to put me in the hole, don't you understand? She turns all the house round her in her quiet way. I wish she was dead, Ned.'

Becky's weapon is as sharp as Blanche's, perhaps sharper, and she is quite ready to use it when the necessity occurs: but she keeps it in reserve for that necessity; never draws it except in self-defence, and takes care that the wound, though it may smart, shall not rankle. She despises

those about her too much to feel lasting resentment; is always willing to shake hands with a baffled assailant; and generally manages that her adversary shall be as placable as she is herself. Neither Blanche nor Becky cares about truth; but Becky knows the value of falsehood, and that its power is easily worn out by promiscuous use. She reserves it therefore for great occasions, and tells the truth, unless something considerable is to be got by lying. Blanche lies without any motive except the exercise of her ingenuity, and thus wastes her mendacity to no purpose.

Neither Blanche nor Becky cares about her friends, but Blanche adopts and throws them away from mere caprice. She is constantly forming useless intimacies, and turning them into mischievous enmities. Becky bestows her affection only on those whom she thinks worthy of it; that is to say, on those whom she hopes to make her instruments. *If* she finds them useful, and *while* she finds them useful, she 'grapples them to her soul with hooks of steel.' When they become useless, she lets them go, but quietly and silently, without any breach, so that if at a future time they should become serviceable, as is the case in one or two memorable instances, she may be able at once to resume them. Blanche and Becky are both fond of admiration, but Becky knows that it is not to be obtained by asking for it. She resolves to be simple and unaffected, and being a consummate actress she succeeds. Blanche is always imploring attention, always trying on a new manner or a new character. 'She drags her shoulders,' says one of her intended victims, 'out of her dress; she never lets her eyes alone; she goes about

simpering and ogling, like a French waiting-maid.' The inside of Becky is diseased enough, but the outside is polished, consistent, and natural. Blanche's exterior is in as bad taste as her interior is corrupt. It is all fantastic, gaudy, glaring, and ill-assorted.

Becky is a simple character; Blanche is an inconsistent one.

As we use these words in a technical sense, we shall explain them at some length; and we hope that our explanation may throw light on that portion of poetical imitation—by far the most important portion—which has human nature for its subject.

Fictitious characters may, we think, be conveniently divided into three classes—the Simple, the Mixed, and the Inconsistent.

By simple characters, we mean the persons to whom no qualities are attributed by the poet, except those which are subservient to one another, and co-operate in the main work which the person in question has to do. By mixed characters, we mean the persons who are endowed by him with different attributes, independent of one another, some of which are essential to the principal parts which they have to perform, and others have no connection with them. By inconsistent characters, we mean those who possess discordant qualities,—qualities which counteract or modify, or even neutralise, one another. The test whether a character is simple, mixed, or inconsistent is, to try what would be the effect of removing any one of its attributes. If that removal would leave it incomplete, unfit to execute the

duties assigned to it by the poet, it is a simple character. If the quality supposed to be removed would not be missed, the character is mixed. If that removal would render the rest of the character more harmonious, more efficient for the performance of any one or more of its parts, it is not only mixed, but also inconsistent.

There are no simple characters in real life. Nature varies almost infinitely her attributes, and gives to every man innumerable qualities, some of which are independent of one another, and others are discordant. All her characters are both mixed and inconsistent; and it is this mixture and inconsistency that renders them distinct. Every human being belongs to so many thousand different classes, that no two individuals, possessing precisely the same qualities in precisely the same proportions, have ever been found.

But the poet has not space for these details. The greater part of his characters are simple, because they are wanted only for some particular purpose: they are the Fortis Gyas, fortisque Cloanthus, and Fidus Achates of his muster roll. All that we wish to know of Banquo, Shakspeare tells us; namely, that he is brave. All that we hear of Duncan is that he is kind. We should think it impertinent, if some scenes were added to Macbeth, for the purpose of showing what sort of a husband Banquo was, or what were the favourite amusements of Duncan. Even of the more highly finished characters, the greater part are simple. Ulysses is a simple character. The elements of which he is composed are, strong domestic and patriotic affections, patience, dissimulation, prudence.

sagacity, presence of mind, fertility of resource, intrepidity and daring amounting almost to rashness. Every one of these qualities was necessary to bring him from Ogygia to Ithaca, and to enable him to plan and to effect the destruction of the suitors. They form the whole of his character, so far has Homer as revealed it to us. Richard the Third is a simple character, even his gaiety could not be abstracted from him without leaving a gap in the general outline. His wit is necessary to show his remorseless unscrupulousness, his unflinching audacity. It is provoked by his crimes. It is most brilliant when he is planning or executing, or reflecting on some atrocity. Hypocrisy, treachery, and murder are his sport. He prepares his crimes with satisfaction,—he looks back to them with merriment. It is not that he has any pleasure in human suffering, but that he is utterly indifferent to it. He does not torture, he only kills, and kills only those who are in his way. But as obstacle after obstacle, that is to say, life after life, that rose between him and the crown, is removed, his delight breaks out in the bitter yet playful humour which makes him at once the most detestable and the most amusing of villains.

Perhaps the finest mixed character ever drawn is Henry, as Prince Hal and as Henry the Fifth. His levity and dissipation, pushed, as they are, almost to dissoluteness, have no connexion with his wisdom and courage. If the ludicrous scenes in the two parts of Henry the Fourth had never been written, we should have felt their loss. The remainder would have formed a great tragedy, in which

Prince Henry would have been a well-drawn, grand and simple character. If the serious scenes had been lost, we should have had a most amusing comedy with Falstaff and Hal as its heroes. And yet the character is not one of those to which we have given the name of inconsistent. The baser and the higher qualities of Henry do not interfere with one another. He throws off at once the trifler when he is required to rise into the hero, and the hero when he is at leisure to subside into the trifler. The reader perceives no incongruity. He feels that the same desire for excitement, indifference to consequences, and light-hearted audacity, seduce Hal to indulge his taste for humour at Gadshill and the Boar's Head, and impel Henry to seek glory by encountering Percy at Shrewsbury and all France at Agincourt.

Hotspur, like Henry, is tragi-comic. His wit and his humour almost rival those of Falstaff. They are most brilliant on the gravest occasions. He jests in a stormy interview with the king—he jests when he is dividing England with his co-conspirators—he is never more amusing than when he takes leave of his wife before his last fatal battle. And yet we are inclined to class him among simple characters. His gaiety is the mere ebullition of a bold, self-relying, impetuous, ambitious temper, which exults in contest and danger. His delight, as the struggle approaches, foams out in taunt, and jest, and mockery, but his levity does not influence his conduct. Levity is an element in the disposition of Prince Hal, but only in the *manner* of Hotspur.

We now come to inconsistent characters. It may be as well to state expressly, what perhaps is obvious, that by an inconsistent character we do not mean what is generally expressed by those words,—a character to which incompatible attributes are assigned. Such characters cannot exist in nature, and of course ought to be banished from fiction. We repeat, that by an inconsistent character we mean one in which the elements, though compatible, are repugnant. The great painter of inconsistent characters is Pope. They suit his delight in contrast and antithesis. One of the most finished is that of Wharton.

> Thus with each gift of nature and of art,
> And wanting nothing but an honest heart,
> Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt;
> And most contemptible, to shun contempt;
> His Passion still, to covet gen'ral praise,
> His Life, to forfeit it a thousand ways;
> A constant Bounty, which no friend has made;
> An angel Tongue, which no man can persuade;
> A fool, with more of Wit than all mankind,
> Too rash for thought, for action too refin'd:
> A Tyrant to the wife his heart approves;
> A Rebel to the very king he loves;
> He dies, sad outcast of each church and state,
> And, harder still! flagitious, yet not great.
>
> (*Moral Essays*, Ep. i.)

Don Quixote is a boldly-drawn inconsistent character. He is a man of great good sense, and knowledge of books and of the world. If romances of chivalry had never been written, he would have passed the whole of his life as he passed the greater part of it,—a respected country gentle-

man, dividing his time between literature, field sports, and society. But his head is turned by stories of knight-errantry. He devotes himself to their study, admits implicitly all their absurdities, and, while he remains sensible and sagacious on all other subjects, on this alone he is mad. He believes himself to be living in the times of Amadis de Gaul, and Florismarte of Hyrcania; expects adventures like theirs, and makes their conduct his model. So far as these delusions extend, his bodily and his mental senses are perverted. He takes windmills for giants, sheep for armies, pothouses for castles, and Maritornes for a princess. When out of his armour he is just and humane; but when occupied as a knight-errant, he thinks it his duty to require any passenger whom he meets to admit the peerless beauty of Dulcinea, and to murder those who refuse. As a philosopher, he reasons wisely on the theory of government, on necessity of penal laws, and the duty of submission to authority: as a knight he attacks the king's officers, breaks the chain of galley-slaves, and lets loose a band of wretches who have just confessed to him the justice of their sentences.

With wonderful skill he is made to pass and repass from sanity to madness. He sits before Master Peter's puppet-show, a quiet intelligent spectator, criticises the management of the story, and objects to the introduction of bells as an anachronism; but no sooner is he interested in the scene than he believes in its reality, rushes at the little theatre to the rescue of Melisendra, cuts to pieces the hostile puppets, would have beheaded the showman

himself if he had not ducked under his stage, and exclaims in the exultation of his triumph, 'Would to God that this could have been seen by all the despisers of knight-errantry! Where would the brave Gayferos and the beautiful Melisendra now have been if I had not been present?' The showman and Sancho convince him that he has taken puppets for men; he agrees to pay for the damage, and sits down with Master Peter and the innkeeper to compute it. King Marsilio, who has lost a head, is valued at four reals; Charlemagne, whose crown is split, at three: and for the fair Melisendra, whose nose is gone, Master Peter asks five. At the name of Melisendra, Don Quixote relapses into his delusion:—'Don't play your tricks upon me,' he cries; 'Melisendra must have been safe in Paris an hour ago. I watched her horse as she was making her escape; he was flying rather than galloping!'

For the perfection of the inconsistent character (as, indeed, for the perfection of every other) we must go to Shakespeare. One of the finest, among the many he has drawn, is Othello. He is a union not merely of dissimilar qualities, but of dissimilar natures. He is a civilised barbarian. All that we know of his birth is, that it is 'fetched from men of royal siege.' How or when he became a Christian we are not told; but it is certain that he must have passed his childhood in a harem, acquiring with his earliest impressions the jealousy and suspicion respecting women, and the domestic despotism, of a Mahometan court. His youth and manhood are military;

and we find him, at the opening of the play, 'somewhat declined into the vale of years,' a grave and dignified soldier. He is

> The noble Moor whom the full senate
> Call all-in-all sufficient—the noble nature
> Whom passion cannot shake; whose solid virtue
> The shot of accident or dart of chance
> Can neither graze nor pierce.

All the barbarian is obliterated. His behaviour during the two first acts justifies Lodovico's praise. Nothing can be more calm or more polished. When, within one hour of his marriage, he is summoned before the senate, he does not resent the contumely or even the violence of Brabantio; he pleads his cause with consummate moderation and skill, accepts the command of Cyprus with modest self-reliance, obeys cheerfully the order of instant departure, and, without a shadow of suspicion, places Desdemona in Iago's hands to follow him.

The very morning after their arrival at Cyprus, Iago darkly hints to him a doubt as to the firmness of Desdemona's virtue. He accuses her of nothing actually wrong, but states plausible grounds why she should be watched. The suspicion acts on Othello like a specific poison. It set on fire all the old Mahometan tendency to jealousy, which a European life seemed to have eradicated. His barbarian nature reappears. At first his habits of civilisation combat it.

He proposes to act as becomes a great Venetian noble; to inquire into his wife's conduct; and, if Iago's suspicions

prove unfounded, to forget them; if they are confirmed, to separate himself from Desdemona,—

He says:

> 'I'll see, before I doubt; when I doubt prove.
> If I *do* prove her haggard,
> I'll whistle her off, and let her down the wind:
> Away at once with love or jealousy.

Desdemona enters, and he exclaims:—

> If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!—
> I'll not believe it.

They go together to a great dinner, at the end of which Othello and Iago meet again.

By this time the barbarian has got the upper hand. He demands, indeed, from Iago proof of Desdemona's guilt, but in the meantime assumes it. Iago tells him, by way of proof, that lately he lay with Cassio, and heard him exclaim in his sleep,—

> Sweet Desdemona,
> Let us hide our loves.
> Oh, cursed fate, that gave thee to the Moor!

The falsehood of this story was obvious. Cassio and Iago had parted the very evening of the marriage; they had arrived at Cyprus in separate ships the day before this conversation took place, and the intervening night had been the busy one which was filled by the drunken quarrel and Cassio's disgrace.

Othello swallows it with savage credulity. He no longer thinks of inquiry, or of separation. He is again the Arab or the Bedouin of his youth; and no conduct, except such as might fit a Bedouin or an Arab, occurs to him.

He cries,

> Oh blood, Iago, blood!
> Within these three days let me hear thee say,
> That Cassio's not alive.—I will withdraw,
> To furnish me with some swift means of death
> For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

The last words are remarkable. Othello has so thoroughly forgotten the habits of civilised life, that he does not see that, after having murdered his wife, the daughter of a Venetian senator, and assassinated Cassio, a man of high rank in the republic, he cannot remain governor of Cyprus. Well may Desdemona exclaim,—

> My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,
> Were he in favour, as in humour, altered.

From thence until the very last scene the savage in him reigns triumphant. He does not preserve even the outward proprieties of his station, but insults and strikes his wife in the presence of the envoy from the senate.

But the instant that he has atiated his revenge, the spirit from the desert seems to be appeased by the sacrifice, and quits him. He now 'knows that his act shows horrible and grim.' He listens to the proofs of Desdemona's innocence, apologises frankly to Cassio, and sits in judgment on his own folly and crime. The horror of his situation, instead of disturbing, quiets him. He resumes the calm dignity of a great Venetian leader. Lodovico proposes to carry him away a close prisoner for trial. Othello makes no direct answer to the threat, but draws in a few clear and singularly unimpassioned lines

a short outline 'of these unlucky deeds,' and then retires from the 'extreme perplexity' in which he is involved by the only exit that is left to him, a resolute and not undignified suicide.

Mr. Thackeray's Blanche is, as we said before, an inconsistent character. Her desire of power is constantly interfering with her desire of sympathy. She cannot help teasing those whom she wishes to please. In her pursuit of immediate admiration she loses permanent esteem, and becomes a plaything when she aims at being an idol. When she sits between two admirers, she flirts alternately with each, and thus betrays to them both the emptiness of her kindness. Becky, we repeat, is a simple character. Numerous as her qualities are, they are not discordant. Not one of them could be taken from her without damaging her powers of worldly advancement.

Rawdon Crawley is one of Mr. Thackeray's best inconsistent characters. He is a gambler, indeed a blackleg, and would be an actual swindler if a swindler could be tolerated in society. He approaches as near to swindling as the law will allow. He preys on the young and the inexperienced, contracts debts which he knows never can be paid, and lies whenever it suits his convenience. Yet this degraded nature has its amiable and its respectable side. He is fond of his wife and of his child. He is brave, and he is grateful. He has an honour of his own, which, though its province is narrow, reigns there supreme. He knows that his only chance of escaping ruin is through the friendship of Lord Steyne. But the instant that he

suspects how that friendship has been purchased, he breaks with his patron, sends back, poor as he is, the thousand pounds which he believes to have been Steyne's present to Becky, and is with difficulty restrained from shooting him.

Arthur Pendennis is a mixed character. He is a poet grafted on a dandy. So far as he is a dandy, he is vain, conceited, and extravagant. So far as he is a poet, he is inflammable and inconstant, easily attracted and easily repelled. Having scarcely any seriously adopted opinions, or principles, or plans, he is at the mercy of those around him. It is a defect in the story that his conduct recurs in a sort of circle. He falls in love with an actress, and is jilted—makes love to Blanche, is well received by her, and then cast off—and to please his mother offers himself to Laura; she refuses him, and so ends the first volume.

In the second volume he falls in love with a porter's daughter, and is cured by a fever; to please his uncle he proposes himself again to Blanche, and is engaged to her. She jilts him again, and again he offers himself to Laura; and, as it was necessary to end the novel, this time she accepts him.

There is nothing very attractive in such an outline, but many of the details are full of beauty. The wonder with which, after he is cured of an attachment, he revisits its former object, is admirably described. So is his last courtship of Blanche at Tunbridge Wells, where the *blasé* dandy and *blasée* flirt, after mutual attempts, all ineffectual, to be fond and sentimental, confess to one

another that the marriage is not of their own seeking, but has been arranged for them by their mammas and uncles, and that they must submit to it like a good little boy and girl.

We have said nothing about the tragical parts of the story — about Colonel Altamont and his frightful secret and mysterious threats; or Warrington's discarded wife. They are tacked so slightly to the comic portions, that they might easily be detached altogether. And if Mr. Thackeray should think fit hereafter to lighten 'Pendennis,' and so improve its chances of floating down to posterity, we recommend that these be the portions of its rigging that are first cut away.

'ESMOND' is a reproduction of the manners, feelings, thoughts, and even style which prevailed from 180 to 140 years ago. It is a wonderful *tour de force.*

Without doubt, one of the charms of art is the triumph over difficulty. But the triumph ought not to be a barren one. The value of what is gained ought to bear a considerable proportion to the labour that has been expended. The epic in twenty-four books, from each of which a letter was eliminated, was not more but less pleasing than if the author had allowed himself free use of the alphabet. Taken at the best, the task of a novelist is difficult. It is no easy thing to invent a plausible story, a story which shall have a beginning, a middle, and an end — a beginning which shall raise expectation, a middle which shall continue it, and an end which shall satisfy it.

Neither Richardson nor Fielding has succeeded in doing so more than once. It is less difficult, but still far from easy, to people that story with characters, distinct, natural, and amusing; and to make them talk and act like the living models supplied by the author's experience. If to the obstacles which nature has thrown across his path, the poet thinks fit to add fresh ones of his own; if he builds up walls in order to jump over them, the reader always suspects that what is supplied to him is not the author's best; that some real merit which he would have enjoyed is sacrificed to an imaginary one which he does not care about.

Now the amount of the self-imposed burden which Mr. Thackeray has undertaken to bear may be estimated, when we consider how few have been the writers who have ventured to submit to it. For at least 3,000 years poets have taken their principal characters from history or mythology. But they have seldom borrowed more than the names, and perhaps one or two of the most notorious qualities, and one or two of the most notorious adventures, of their heroes. Everything else they have generally copied from what they saw around them. All Homer's men and women, whether they be Europeans or Asiatics, Greeks or Phæacians, Trojans or allies, speak the same language, use the same weapons, amuse themselves with the same games, worship the same gods, believe in the same legends, are in fact identical in habits and manners. All those of Virgil, whether natives of Ilium or Carthage, of Sicily or Latium, are Romans of the Augustan age.

Four great tragic poets, perhaps the four greatest that ever wrote, have brought on the stage Theseus. In the 'Œdipus Coloneus,' he is an Athenian statesman; in the 'Supplices,' an Athenian rhetorician; in 'Phédre,' a courtier of Louis Quatorze; and in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' a highly educated English gentleman. Not one of these great writers thought himself bound to reproduce the Theseus of tradition, half savage, half divine, the first cousin and imitator of Hercules, who roamed over Greece destroying robbers, killing wild beasts, and carrying off women; a mixture of giant and knight-errant: raised, according to one legend, for his virtues, to be a god; according to another, for his crimes seated for ever in hell. Even Walter Scott, though—in order to please critics, who are intolerant of anachronisms—he endeavours to copy the manners and feelings of a past age, does not try to speak in its language or in its style. His events may be mediæval, but he relates them like any other novelist of the nineteenth century. Though the scene of 'Rob Roy' is laid 140 years ago, and though Osbaldiston is his own biographer, he tells his story as if he had just finished his education in the New Town of Edinburgh. The courage, the diligence, and the skill of Mr. Thackeray have enabled him to avoid this inconsistency. Colonel Esmond writes as one of the best of her wits might have written in the reign of Queen Anne.

We cannot, however, avoid thinking that this merit has been purchased too dearly. The reader feels always that he is listening to falsetto tones; that he is looking at the

imitation of an imitation. If Esmond had been confined within as short limits, it might have taken rank with the 'Defence of Natural Society.' But a parody three volumes long becomes tiresome. We want the author to throw aside the fetters which impede his movements, though we require him to keep the costume which disguises his person. We wish to hear Jacob's own voice, though the hands be the hands of Esau.

The period at which Mr. Thackeray has laid his scene was scarcely a matter of choice, when once he had determined to imitate antiquated forms of thought and expression. Those who succeeded the wits of Queen Anne's days were moderns. Thomson, Goldsmith, Adam Smith, and Hume, all remembered Pope and Swift; but they wrote as we do;—better, perhaps, so far as they took more pains, but with no other perceptible difference. The giants, indeed, who ruled the literary world between the Reformation and the Restoration used a style and a language sufficiently different from our own; but they were unfit for domestic narrative. No one could have tolerated the loves of Beatrix and Esmond enveloped in the grand periods of Bacon or Milton, or even in the quaint, loose verbiage of the 'Arcadia.' The school which Mr. Thackeray has imitated was remote enough to be peculiar, and near enough for its peculiarities not to offend.

But that period had little else to recommend it. It was one to which every Englishman must look back with disgust. Up to the Restoration the English, at least in the higher classes, had been a serious people. Primo-

geniture as respects land, and the exclusion of the younger branches of even the greatest houses from nobility—the happy accident from which so many of our peculiarities flow—had prevented the existence among us of the idle, frivolous caste which, during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, formed the aristocracy of the greater part of the Continent; a caste excluded by its prejudices from commerce, from the Bar, from medicine, and, except in its high dignities, from the Church, and naturally led, with the exception of the small portion of it that could find employment in arms, to dedicate its ample leisure to place-hunting and amusement. From the Conquest until the Restoration the rich and the noble of England had had duties to perform. The rich were great merchants or feudal proprietors; the noble were statesmen or soldiers; all the members of the younger branches, and the younger members of the eldest branch, who in France would have thronged the court of the sovereign, or lived in the *ruelles* of the capital, were actively engaged in business or in professions.

But during the sixty or seventy years which immediately followed the Restoration, London seems to have been the head-quarters of a fashionable crowd which, in numbers, in wealth, in idleness, in dissoluteness, in everything, in short, except education and refinement, rivalled the *grand monde* of Paris. Of course we cannot now dwell on the causes of this phenomenon. The increased wealth of the unemployed class was probably connected with the abolition of the feudal tenures, and with the facilities thereby

given to mortgages and sales, with the increased occupation of land by tenants instead of by proprietors, with the enormous augmentation of trade, and with the large incomes, indeed the large fortunes, that could be made in the public service, or squeezed from the royal bounty. Its dissoluteness was partly a reaction against the austerities of Puritanism, and partly a coarse imitation of the polished dissipation of France; but it would probably have shown itself, even if there had been no Puritans, and no French: in fact, it was the necessary result of wealth wanting occupation and literature. There were, of course, literary circles as brilliant as those of any other period, the circles in which the great writers of that age were formed; but everything shows that the mass of the fashionable world was then deplorably ignorant. The women knew nothing, and professed to know nothing. The men passed many of their mornings, and almost all their evenings, in clubs and at the theatres; smoking, drinking, and playing at cards, or listening to stilted tragedies or indecent comedies.

This levity was made hideous by the intermixture of ferocity not more savage, indeed, perhaps less so, than that of the previous century, but horrible in itself, and still more horrible as the cruelty of careless voluptuaries. A sanguinary penal code was enforced with unrelenting severity. Temple Bar and London Bridge were fringed with human heads. With not one-fourth of the present population, there were probably fifty times as many executions every year as there are now. The whippings of females, as well as of males, were perpetual, and were

paraded up and down the most public thoroughfares; and yet these punishments were as inefficacious as they were cruel. The roads around London were beset by highwaymen; the streets were infested by footpads; amateurs in crime, who have been immortalised in 'The Spectator' under the name of Mohocks, insulted and injured passengers by way of amusement. No one seems to have engaged in politics who was not sooner or later, and generally more than once, guilty of treason; the basest and the most unscrupulous traitors being those whom their crowns placed above the law. Duels were frequent and ferocious; the seconds fought as well as the principals, and victory was often obtained by treachery. Other aristocracies may have been more contemptible, but none can have been less attractive or amiable, than that of the English court from the return of Charles the Second down to the death of Queen Anne.

Over-indulgence, except indeed to the whimpering little goddess whom he deifies in every novel, is not Mr. Thackeray's weakness. His *dramatis personæ* are as black as their originals could have been. The only prominent male character who is not an habitual drunkard is the hero. Three Lord Castlewoods are introduced. The first is described as passing his early life abroad, where he was remarkable only for duelling, vice, and play, and where he marries and then deserts the mother of the hero. He passes his middle age in London, a hanger-on of ordinaries, and a brawler about Alsatia and Whitefriars; marries during his first wife's life an old maid with money;

and is killed at the battle of the Boyne. The second is a drunken sensualist, who ill-treats and insults his wife, spoils his children, gambles away his property, and is killed in a duel. The third turns Roman Catholic, marries ill, quarrels with his own relations, and is left, at the end of the story, the slave of his wife's family of German adventurers.

The hero, of course, possesses the ordinary heroic qualities of courage, generosity, and affectionateness. But even *he* conspires for the purpose of occasioning a new revolution, though he strongly suspects that his success will be mischievous to his country. He is not seduced by the entreaties of any friend; he is not driven on by the blind, instinctive, spaniel-like loyalty, which leads a legitimist to throw his fortunes, his life, his family, and even his patriotism at the feet of him whom he adores as his sovereign. He is himself the originator of the scheme; he estimates calmly the results; 'has his own forebodings as to what they may be, his usual sceptic doubts as to the benefit which may accrue to the family by bringing a tipsy young monarch back to it.' The motive which, in spite of all these doubts and forebodings, impels him to endeavour to inflict, at the hazard of a civil war, such a master on his country, is merely the hope that by doing so he may please his cousin Beatrix, one of the heroines of the novel, a violent Tory, who for ten long years has been the object of Esmond's unsuccessful adoration. With no other object, he brings the Pretender in disguise to England, and conceals him in the house of his relation, Lady Castlewood,

the mother of Beatrix. His suspicions as to the worthlessness of his intended master increase during the journey, and are turned into convictions by the Prince's behaviour as a guest. Still he perseveres, until the Prince's attentions to Beatrix become marked. Then,

> Horrible doubts and torments racked Esmond's soul. 'Twas a scheme of personal ambition, a daring stroke for a selfish end—he knew it. What cared he in his heart who was king? Were not his very sympathies and secret convictions on the other side—on the side of People, Parliament, Freedom?—And here was he engaged for a prince that had scarce heard the word liberty; that priests and women, tyrants by nature both, made a tool of.

Beatrix is sent into the country; and Esmond, having provided against this danger, resumes the conspirator, and passes a long day with the Prince, 'writing proclamations and addresses to the country, to the Scots, to the clergy, to the people of London and England, announcing the arrival of the exiled descendant of three sovereigns, and his acknowledgment by his sister as heir to the throne.' The Prince discovers the banishment of Beatrix, and resents it. 'If I have garters to give away,' he cries, ''tis to noblemen who are not so ready to think evil. Bring me a coach, and let me quit this place, or let the fair Beatrix return to it.'

Esmond's loyalty is instantly suspended. He takes the Prince to a window looking into Kensington Square, where the watchman is crying the hour; reminds his guest, the man whom he is endeavouring to make his sovereign, that 5,000*l.* is offered by Parliament for his capture, points out to him how easily he could betray

him; and adds, 'By the Heaven that made me I would do so, if I thought the Prince, for *his* honour's sake, would not desist from insulting *ours*.'

The Prince promises amendment, and Esmond continues as zealously as before to urge on the revolution. The Prince renews his attempts on Beatrix. Esmond breaks his sword, and renounces him. Detestable as most of the characters in the novel are, we do not recollect one to whom selfishness and wickedness equal to those of the hero are attributed. Even in France, demoralised as it has been by sixty years of revolutions, the most unprincipled *émeutier* would not make one merely to gratify his mistress.

We have already mentioned Mr. Thackeray's practice of having a good and a bad heroine; the one to refuse the hero, the other to marry him. In Esmond they are mother and daughter, the daughter being the bad heroine who rejects, the mother the good heroine who accepts. We do not object to the mere disparity of age. Many a boy of eighteen has fallen in love with a woman of twenty-eight. But in this case a man of forty falls in love with a woman of about fifty—a woman with whom he has lived in intimacy ever since he was a child, who was the confidant and approver for many years of his love for her own daughter, whom he has always considered, and wished to consider, as his mother. Such a plot is neither natural nor pleasing.

Both the heroines are well drawn. The whole work it full of praises of the mother, Lady Castlewood.

Perhaps these are meant only to show the uxoriousness of Esmond; but if they express Mr. Thackeray's opinion as to the beauty of the portrait which he has painted, we feel bound to record our dissent. Lady Castlewood appears to us to be a woman with a strong sense of duty and religion, and a heart always overflowing with affection, and eager to receive it. But all is spoilt by violence of temper, and by a jealousy so irritable and so exclusive, that even Esmond, after their marriage, cannot venture in her presence to show his love for their daughter. 'Her husband's love,' says the daughter, Mrs. Warrington, 'was a gift so precious, that she was for keeping it all, and could part with none of it, even to her daughter.' Mr. Warrington affirms that their happiness in marriage was perfect. If that was true, Colonel Esmond's standard of happiness must have been low, since it was conferred on him by a wife of strong feelings, irritable, suspicious temper, quick sensibility, and undiscriminating, unrelenting jealousy.

This is her first husband's description of her: —

'Is a woman,' he said, 'never to forgive a husband who goes a tripping? Do you take me for a saint?'

'Indeed, sir, I do not,' says Harry, with a smile.

'Since that time my wife is as cold as the statue at Charing Cross. I tell thee she has no forgiveness in her, Henry. Her coldness blights my whole life, and sends me to the punch-bowl or driving about the country. My children are not mine, but hers, when we are together. 'Tis only when she is out of sight with her abominable cold glances, that they'll come to me, and that I dare to give them as much as a kiss; and that's why I take 'em and love 'em in other people's houses, Harry. I'm killed by

the very virtue of that proud woman. Virtue! Give me the virtue that can forgive; give me the virtue that thinks not of preserving itself, but of making other folks happy.'

Esmond fancies that this is a case for mediation, and ventures most gently to hint to his adored mistress, that she is doing her husband harm by her ill opinion of him; and that the happiness of all the family depends upon setting her right.

'Have you ever heard me utter a word in my lord's disparagement?' she asked hastily, hissing out her words, and stamping her foot.

'Indeed, no,' Esmond said, looking down.

'Are you come to me as his ambassador—*You*?' she continued.

'I would sooner see peace between you than anything else in the world,' Harry answered; 'and would go on any embassy that had that end.'

'So *you* are my lord's go-between?' she went on, not regarding this speech. 'You are sent to bid me back into slavery again, and inform me that my lord's favour is graciously restored to his handmaid? He is weary of Covent Garden, is he, that he comes home and would have the fatted calf killed?'

'There's good authority for it, surely,' said Esmond.

'For a son, yes: but my lord is not my son. It was he who broke our happiness down, and he bids me to repair it. I presume you have fulfilled your mission now, sir. Perhaps you too have learned to love drink, and to hiccup over your wine or punch;—which is your lordship's favourite liquor? Perhaps you too put up at the Rose on your way through London, and have your acquaintances in Covent Garden. My services to you, sir, to principal and ambassador, to master and—lacquey.'

Beatrix is inconsistent in the sense in which we use that word. She has great excellences and great defects, and her different qualities interfere with one another. She

has courage, decision, presence of mind, and, for some purposes, self-command. She has intelligence, eloquence, wit, and knowledge of men and of things. This powerful machinery is directed by ambition and vanity, and driven by a strong will. But her pride is overbearing, her affections are capricious, her temper is irritable and wayward, and she inherits her mother's jealousy. She has a quick moral sense, a clear perception of the distinctions between virtue and vice, and a general wish to do right, and yet she is perpetually doing wrong—not from ignorance or carelessness, or callous familiarity with evil—she is conscious of her faults while she is committing them, conscious of her defects while she is yielding to them; she repents when all is over—but she obeys the passion of the moment. Here are two views of her by herself. The first is drawn just after she is engaged to the Duke of Hamilton:—

'I hope the world will make you happy, Beatrix,' says Esmond, with a sigh. 'You'll be Beatrix till you are my Lady Duchess—will you not? I shall then make your Grace my very lowest bow.'

'None of these sighs and this satire, cousin,' she says; 'I take his Grace's great bounty thankfully—yes, thankfully; and will wear his honours becomingly. I do not say that he hath touched my heart; but he has my gratitude, obedience, admiration. I have told him that, and no more; and with that his noble heart is content. I am twenty-five years old.' 'Twenty-six, my dear,' says Esmond. 'Twenty-five, sir. I choose to be twenty-five; and in eight years, no man hath ever touched my heart. Yes, you did once for a little, Harry, when you came back, after Lille, and engaging with that murderer, Mohun, and saving Frank's life—I thought I could like you; and mamma begged me hard, on her

knees, and I did—for a day. But the old chill came over me, Harry, and the old fear of you and your melancholy; and I was glad when you went away, and engaged with My Lord Ashburnham, that I might hear no more of you, that's the truth. You are too good for me somehow. I could not make you happy, and should break my heart in trying and not being able to love you. But if you had asked me when we gave you the sword, you might have had me, sir, and we both should have been miserable by this time.'

The second occurs soon after that engagement has terminated by the Duke's violent death. She is taking leave of Esmond as he sets out on his perilous expedition to bring the Pretender to London:—

'Stay, Harry,' continued she, with a tone that had more despondency in it than she was accustomed to show. 'Hear a last word; I do love you. I do admire you—who would not, that has known such love as yours has been for us all? But I think I have no heart. At least I have never seen the man that could touch it; and had I found him, I would have followed him in rags, had he been a private soldier, or to sea, like one of those buccaneers you used to read to us about when we were children. I would do anything for such a man, bear anything for him; but I never found one. You were ever too much of a slave to win my heart; even my lord Duke could not command it. I had not been happy had I married him. I knew that three months after our engagement—and was too vain to break it. O Harry! I cried once or twice, not for him, but with tears of rage because I could not be sorry for him. I was frightened to find I was glad of his death; and were I joined to you, I should have the same sense of servitude, the same longing to escape. We should both be unhappy, and you the most, who are as jealous as the Duke was himself. I tried to love him! I tried, indeed I did: affected gladness when he came; submitted to hear when he was by me; and tried the wife's part I thought I was to play for the rest of my days.'

'I am not good, Harry: my mother is gentle and good, like an angel; I wonder how she should have had such a child. She is weak, but she would die rather than do a wrong; I am stronger than she, but I would do it out of defiance. I do not care for what the parsons tell me with their droning sermons; I used to see them at court, as mean and as worthless as the meanest woman there. Oh, I am sick and weary of the world. I wait but for one thing, and when 'tis done I will take Frank's religion and your poor mother's, and go into a nunnery and end like her.'

Here is a grand scene, in which Lady Castlewood, her son, and Esmond force her into the country to escape the solicitations of the Prince. Lady Castlewood proposes to accompany her:—

'For shame!' burst out Beatrix, in a passion of tears and mortification. 'You disgrace me by your cruel precautions; my own mother is the first to suspect me, and would take me away as my gaoler. I will not go with you, mother; I will go as no one's prisoner. If I wanted to deceive, do you think I could find no means of evading you? My family suspects me. As those mistrust me that ought to love me most, let me leave them; I will go, but I will go alone: to Castlewood be it. I have been unhappy there, and lonely enough; let me go back; but spare me at least the humiliation of setting a watch over my misery, which is a trial I can't bear. Let me go when you will, but alone, or not at all. You three can stay and triumph over my unhappiness, and I will bear it as I have borne it before. Let my gaoler-in-chief go order the coach that is to take me away. I thank you, Henry Esmond, for your share in the conspiracy. All my life long, I'll thank you and remember you; and you, brother, and you, mother, how shall I show my gratitude to you for your careful defence of my honour?'

She swept out of the room with an air of an empress, flinging glances of defiance at us all, and leaving us conquerors of the field, but scared, and almost ashamed of our victory. It did indeed seem hard and cruel that we three should have conspired

the banishment and humiliation of that fair creature. We looked at each other in silence; 'twas not the first stroke by many of our actions in that unlucky time, which being done, we wished undone. We agreed it was the best she should go alone, speaking stealthily to one another, and under our breaths, like persons engaged in an act they felt ashamed in doing.

We are always ordered to admire the beauty of a heroine; but if we obey, it is usually an act of faith. The description is so vague, that we are forced to take her charms on trust. But Mr. Thackeray's portrait of Beatrix is so animated and so individualised, that it affects the imagination as if it were painted in colours instead of words: —

She was a brown beauty; that is, her eyes, hair, and eyebrows, and eyelashes were dark: her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine; except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity; whose foot as it planted itself on the ground was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace,—agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen,—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic, there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes feels young again, and remembers a paragon.

Beatrix is the only character in Esmond that interests; but there are many that amuse. All of them, indeed, amuse; for except when he is playing with a doll which

he wants to dress up as a good heroine, Mr. Thackeray can produce nothing that is not amusing.

One of the best is Father Holt. Mr. Thackeray has wisely abandoned the demure face and stealthy walk and soft hypocrisy of the conventional Jesuit. His Jesuit is a bold, gay man of the world, frank in his exterior, intrepid in danger, kind and affectionate to those whom it is not his interest to injure, unscrupulous when an instrument is to be obtained or an obstacle is to be removed, and keeping in a separate compartment of his mind, undisturbed by the politics with which the rest is filled, his classical tastes and his theological speculations. Such, we have no doubt, the men of action in the order, the men whose intrigues aimed at establishing or subverting thrones, always must have been and always will be.

James the Third has sat to two great painters. Walter Scott took him in middle age, and painted him with a grave and melancholy expression; serious, dignified, and imposing. Mr. Thackeray gives him to us in his youth, before he has been saddened by disappointment and improved by experience. His levity, his sensualism, his obstinacy, his ingratitude, his habitual sacrifice of the future to the present, of business to pleasure, and of every person and of every purpose to his own immediate gratification, are features boldly conceived and vigorously executed: and Mr. Thackeray has skilfully thrown over the whole a varnish of courtesy and graciousness, which softens and renders almost pleasing the despicable and odious character that lies beneath it. Sir Walter was as

much of a Jacobite as it was possible to be in the nineteenth century. Mr. Thackeray's politics are not obtruded. What peeps out of them appears to us to be Whig. James the Third has fared in their hands accordingly.

We cannot quit Esmond without remarking the excellence of the still-life vignettes with which it is adorned. Castlewood House is described over and over, and always with fresh beauty. With great skill it is generally made to form the background of some memorable incident, and imprinted with that incident on the conception of the relator. It is thus introduced, with wonderful effect, just after the parting of Mohun and Castlewood, in apparent amity, but with a fatal quarrel in the heart of each.

Lord Castlewood stood at the door watching his guest and his people as they went out under the arch of the outer gate. When he was there, Lord Mohun turned once more; my Lord Viscount slowly raised his beaver, and bowed. His face wore a peculiar livid look, Harry thought. He cursed and kicked away his dogs, which came jumping about him—then he walked up to the fountain in the centre of the court, and leaned against the pillar and looked into the basin. As Esmond crossed over to his own room, late the chaplain's, on the other side of the court, and turned to enter in at the low door, he saw Lady Castlewood looking through the curtains of the great window of the drawing room over head at my lord as he stood regarding the fountain. There was in the court a peculiar silence: and the scene remained long in Esmond's memory:—the sky bright over head: the buttresses of the building and the sun-dial casting shadow over the gilt *memento mori* inscribed underneath: the two dogs, a black greyhound and a spaniel nearly white, the one with his face up to the sun, and the other snuffing amongst the grass and stones, and my lord leaning

over the fountain, which was splashing audibly. 'Tis strange how that scene and the sound of that fountain remain fixed on the memory of a man who has beheld a hundred sights of splendour, and danger too, of which he has kept no account.

We will extract another, of equal vividness. Esmond is revisiting Castlewood.

He had not seen its ancient grey towers and well-remembered woods for nearly fourteen years, and since he rode thence with my lord, to whom his mistress with her young children by her side waved an adieu. There was the fountain in the court babbling its familiar music, the old hall and its furniture, the carved chair my late lord used, the very flagon he drank from. Esmond's mistress knew he would like to sleep in the little room he used to occupy; 'twas made ready for him, and wall-flowers and sweet herbs set in the adjoining chamber, the chaplain's room.

Esmond rose up before the dawn, passed into the next room, where the air was heavy with the odour of the wall-flowers, and tried the spring, and whether the window worked still. The spring had not been touched for years, but yielded at length, and the whole fabric of the window sank down. Esmond closed the casement up again, as the dawn was rising over Castlewood village; he could hear the clinking at the blacksmith's forge yonder among the trees, across the green, and past the river, on which a mist still lay sleeping.

When an author has been long and repeatedly before the public, the verdict of that great tribunal is likely to be a fair one. We believe its judgment on Mr. Thackeray—a judgment which we are not inclined to question—to be this:—

That he is a bad constructor of a story; that his openings are tedious and involved, his conclusions abrupt and unsatisfactory; and that the intervening space is filled by

incidents with little mutual dependence, and sometimes, as in 'Pendennis,' repetitions of one another. On the other hand, it is admitted that these incidents, taken separately, are often admirable, well imagined, and well told, and amusing exhibitions of the weaknesses or the vices of those who take part in them.

We say 'weaknesses or vices,' because this is the second reproach addressed to Mr. Thackeray. It is said that his men, if they are not absurd, are tyrants or rogues; that his women, if they are not fools, are intriguers or flirts.

This accusation, if it be an accusation, is true as respects his men, and nearly true as respects his women.

If the *dramatis personæ* of 'Vanity Fair' were average samples of the three millions who form the nation that inhabits London, or even if they were samples of what an American would call the Upper Ten Thousand of the Londoners, the London world would be a detestable one. It would be as black morally as it is physically.

Now we are ready to admit that the darkness of Mr. Thackeray's patterns is an artistic defect: that is to say, we think that their texture and general effect would be improved by the introduction of a few threads, not as milkwhite and as superfine as Sir Charles Grandison or Clarissa, but of good average quality and colour; such as Belford, or Colonel Morden, or Miss Howe, or Lady G. But if the objection be not to the artistic effect but to the truth of Mr. Thackeray's characters, if he be accused of giving not merely an unpleasant but a false view of human nature, the answer is this: that in Esmond the scene is laid

in what we have already described as the period in which the English character was most demoralised; and that in 'Vanity Fair' the characters are taken almost exclusively from two classes—the pursuers of nothing but wealth, and the pursuers of nothing but pleasure. Mr. Thackeray paints the former as vain, greedy, purseproud, oppressive, and overbearing in prosperity, and grovelling and base in adversity, and envious and suspicious at all times. He describes the latter as frivolous, heartless, and false, with as much selfishness and vanity and malignity as their Russell-Square neighbours, though concealed under a smoother exterior. And who can say that these pictures are false?

The persons who form the *élite* of London society, the men whose objects are great and whose pursuits are ennobling, the politicians and men of science, the lawyers and physicians, the men of literature and taste, the poets and artists—all these are as much ignored as if the writer were not aware of their existence. The only allusion to such a class is old Osborne's complaint that his daughter, Mrs. Frederic Bullock, 'invites him to meet damned littery men, and keeps the earls and honourables to herself.' 'Vanity Fair' is not a fair sample of the London world taken as a whole, but is a not very exaggerated picture of two portions of it.

We have less to say in defence of 'Pendennis,' for there the field is wider, and yet the result is nearly the same. Even in 'Pendennis,' however, though the hero and his friend Warrington are literary men, their literature is of

an humble kind. It is not the literature of statesmen, historians, or philosophers, of those who write for the purpose of influencing, or instructing, or improving mankind; it is not the literature of those whose object, though more selfish, is still magnanimous and splendid, of those who aim at widely-diffused and permanent fame;—it is the literature of those who write for bread, who use their pens as a labourer does his spade, or a weaver his shuttle. Unless there be some reason for believing that hack writers in general are better than those whom Mr. Thackeray has described, we have no right to quarrel with his descriptions.

There are too, in 'Pendennis,' one or two persons whom we neither laugh at nor hate. There is Laura, who is intelligent and amiable, though indeed she behaves shamefully to the poor girl from the porter's lodge. There is a Mr. Pynsent, in whom there is no harm. There is a Lady Rockminster, who is sensible and kind, though rather *brusque*. In fact, however, we must admit that 'Pendennis' is open to the reproach that it professes to be a fair specimen of English morality, and is not so.

Lastly, Mr. Thackeray is accused of lavishing on his heroines undeserved praise. It is said, that having with great skill put together a creature of which the principal elements are undiscriminating affection, ill-requited devotion, ignorant partiality, a weak will and a narrow intellect, he calls on us to worship his poor idol as the type of female excellence. This is true. Mr. Thackeray does all this; it is one of the greatest blemishes in his books. Happily

it is a blemish that can be removed with ease. Nothing more than a pair of scissors is necessary. Let him carefully cut out every puff which he has wasted on Amelia, and Helen, and Laura, and Rachel; let him leave them, as all the characters in a novel ought to be left, to the reader's unbiassed judgment, and they would take their proper rank among his *dramatis personæ*, though it may differ from that to which their inventor thinks them entitled.

So much for Mr. Thackeray's faults. As to his merits it is admitted that he is unrivalled by any living writer as an inventor and a describer of character; that he has penetrated into the lowest cells of pride, vanity, and selfishness, and laid open some of the secrets of the human prison-house which never were revealed before. Every reader admires the ease and vigour of his dialogue, its sparkling wit and its humour, sometimes broad, sometimes delicate, but always effective.

The few extracts which we have made from the serious portions of his works are sufficient to show that he has great tragic powers. Nothing can be more exquisitely imagined or described than the parting of George Osborne and Amelia. His natural tendency, however, is towards comedy, or rather towards satire. He

> Shines in exposing knaves and painting fools.

But his favourite amusement is the unmasking hypocrisy. He delights to show the selfishness of kindness, the pride of humility, the consciousness of simplicity. If any of

Mr. Thackeray's characters had been copied from real life, and the originals could recognise themselves in his imitations, they never would tremble more than when some apparently good act was ascribed to them. They would expect to see in the next page the virtue turn into a vice or a weakness.

Mr. Thackeray, in his 'ENGLISH HUMOURISTS,' resembles little Mr. Thackeray as a satirist. He is as indulgent to his real as he is severe towards his imaginary characters. He treats, indeed, Congreve with superciliousness, and Sterne with contempt almost amounting to disgust, and trembles before the awful phantom of Swift; but embraces all the other spirits that he calls up—Addison, Steele, Prior, Gay, Pope, Hogarth, Smollett, Fielding, and Goldsmith—with the cordiality of a brother in the craft.

When we read the names which Mr. Thackeray has strung together in his list of humourists, we felt some doubt as to his principle of classification, as to the common quality which grouped together writers so different as Pope and Sterne. In his first lecture Mr. Thackeray professes to point out this common quality:—

> The humorous writer (he says), besides appealing to your sense of ridicule, professes to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness—your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture—your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. To the best of his means and ability he comments on all the ordinary actions and passions of life almost. He takes upon himself to be the week-day preacher, so to speak.

Now, it is difficult to say what moral writer does not

come within so capacious a definition as this. At the head of the humourists of the eighteenth century we should have to put Johnson, Horace Walpole, and Cowper; for never were men who commented more diligently on all the ordinary actions and passions of life, and their comments were deeply tinged with the wisdom resembling absurdity, and the absurdity resembling wisdom, to which we give the name of Humour.

We will not, however, carp any more at Mr. Thackeray's nomenclature. He has given us a set of amusing lectures on interesting persons, and we need not inquire further into his reasons for selecting them. Little new was to be said about Swift after Johnson and Scott, or about Addison after Johnson and Macaulay; but we were glad to see a whole lecture given to Steele, to whose biography less attention has been paid than his amusing chequered character, and the great share which he occupies in our earlier English literature, deserve.

There occurs, however, in this lecture a passage which leads us to suspect that Mr. Thackeray had not studied, with the attention that his great office requires, all the works of the authors whom he is criticising. He treats the dinner, in the 'Polite Conversation,' as a specimen of the habits of the times.

> Fancy (he says) the moral condition of that society in which a lady of fashion provided a great shoulder of veal, a sirloin, a goose, hare, rabbit, chickens, partridges, black puddings, and a ham for a dinner for eight Christians. What — what could have been the condition of that polite world in which people openly ate goose after almond pudding, and took their soup in the middle of dinner (p. 155)?

Now, the great Simon Wagstaff, in the preface to his immortal work, has answered all this by anticipation.

Some (he says) will perhaps object that when I bring my company to dinner I mention too great a variety of dishes, not consistent with the art of cookery, or proper for the season of the year; and *part of the first course is mingled with the second;* besides a failure in politeness by introducing a black pudding to a lord's table, and at a great entertainment. But if I had omitted the black pudding, what would have become of that exquisite reason given by Miss Notable for not eating it? The world perhaps might have lost it for ever, and I should have been justly answerable. I cannot but hope that such hypercritical readers will please to consider that my business was to make so full and complete a body of refined sayings as compact as I could: only taking care to produce them in the most natural and probable manner, in order to allure my readers into the very substance and marrow of this most admirable and necessary art.

It is remarkable that, in his notice of Pope, Mr. Thackeray omits the works in which Pope was strictly a humourist, and notices only those in which he was strictly a poet. Now, we sympathise with his admiration of the satire on Addison, and of the conclusion of the 'Dunciad,' though we should hesitate before we admitted that in the latter 'Pope shows himself the equal of all poets of all times.' But if we had had to point out the work in which the peculiar powers of Pope, and especially his powers as a humourist, shine the brightest, we should have selected, not the 'Satires' or the 'Dunciad,' but the 'Rape of the Lock.'

The best of the lectures is, we think, that on Fielding; and we are delighted to read Mr. Thackeray's bold and cordial and discriminating praise of this great, but, we fear,

somewhat neglected artist; a moralist, from whom the generation that is now passing away imbibed a heartier contempt for meanness and duplicity, and a heartier sympathy with courage, frankness, and manliness, than we fear are to be acquired from the more decorous narratives which form the mental food of their successors.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

Uncle Tom's Cabin — Dred.

[The following article on 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was partially published in the 'Edinburgh Review,' during my absence from Europe. Considerable portions of the matter contained in the proofs, as I finally settled them, were omitted. It is now reprinted unmutilated, indeed verbatim, from the revise as it left my hands.

I have added an article on Mrs. Stowe's novel 'Dred,' which appeared in the 'Quarterly Review' of April 1857.

The extracts from the contemporary literature of America seem to show that if the result of the presidential election of 1860 had been different, separation would have come not from the South but from the North.]

THE sale of 'UNCLE TOM'S CABIN' is the most marvellous literary phenomenon that the world has witnessed.

It came out as a sort of feuilleton in the 'National Era,' a Washington paper. The death of Uncle Tom was the first portion published, indeed the first that was written. It appeared in the summer of 1851, and excited so much attention, that Mrs. Stowe added a beginning and middle to her end, by composing and printing from week to week the story as we now have it, until it was concluded in March, 1852. It was soon after reprinted at Boston in two volumes — a form in which we have not seen it in

England, although by the end of Nov. 1852, 150,000 copies had been sold in America. The first London edition was published in May, 1852, and was not large, for the European popularity of a picture of negro life was doubted. But in the following September, the London publishers furnished to one house 10,000 copies per day for about four weeks, and had to employ 1,000 persons in preparing copies to supply the general demand.

We cannot follow it beyond 1852, but at that time more than a million of copies had been sold in England; probably ten times as many as have been sold of any other work, except the Bible and Prayer-book.

All that we know respecting the sale in France is, that 'Uncle Tom' still covers the shop windows of the Boulevards, and that one publisher alone, Eustace Barba, has sent out five editions in different forms. Before the end of 1852 it had been translated into Italian, Spanish, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Flemish, German, Polish, and Magyar. There are two Dutch translations, and twelve German ones—and the Italian translation enjoys the honour of the pope's prohibition. It has been dramatised in twenty forms, and acted in every capital in Europe, and in the free States of America.

Its moral influence, though it has not been as wonderful as its literary popularity, has been remarkable. In the form of a novel it is really a political pamphlet. It is an attack on the Fugitive Slave Law of America; and though it has not effected the repeal of that law, it has rendered its complete execution impossible.

Those among our readers to whom the subject is not familiar may perhaps be interested by a short account of the origin and the nature of that law.

Slavery is a status so repugnant to the principles of Christianity, that, though never formally abolished, it gradually died out, as, with the diffusion of knowledge and the improvement of intelligence, the spirit of our religion was better understood, and its precepts were better obeyed. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, it was practically extinct in the civilised portions of Europe. Its revival is one of the crimes of religious intolerance. At that time orthodoxy was supposed to be essential to salvation. The Church of Rome condemned to eternal damnation, as indeed she does now, all whose faith on any point, however practically unimportant, however purely speculative, however unintelligible, differed from the creed which she thought fit to proclaim. The Reformers followed her example. Each sect believed those, whose opinions varied from its own, worthy of the severest punishment which can be inflicted in this world, and destined to perpetual suffering in the other. The strongest term of reproach and antipathy in the English language, the word in which abhorrence and contempt are concentrated, is *miscreant*. That is to say, a person whose religious belief differs from that of the speaker.

When such was the sentence which each sect passed on its fellow Christians — on men who agreed with them as to the precepts of Revelation, and differed from them only as to the essence of the Being from whom it was derived,

or as to the nature of His relations to mankind — of course they were not more merciful to infidels. The Roman Catholic, who condemned a Protestant to be burnt alive here, and to be tormented for never-ending millions of years hereafter, had indeed nothing worse in store for the follower of Mahomet or of Menu. The difference seems to have been, that they hated most the heretics and despised most the heathens. The former they treated as rebels, the latter as enemies. They believed the deities of Paganism to be real existences, to be devils in a state of permanent war with our Creator and Saviour, and their worshippers, therefore, to be the allies and auxiliaries of the enemies of God and of His people. They felt for them no more sympathy than we do for wolves or for tigers; in fact, they felt less, for, though we delight in killing a tiger, we have no pleasure in torturing one.

When it occurred, therefore, to the Spaniards, that the tropical regions of the new hemisphere, which were then mortal to the white labourer, might perhaps be profitably cultivated by seizing negroes in Africa, and transporting them to America, the cruelty or the injustice of thus treating the negro was not an element in the deliberation. He was a heathen, a worshipper of devils, a vessel of wrath, created for the purpose of enduring eternal misery; and to give him a foretaste in this world of what was to be his fate in the next, was only carrying out the decrees of Providence. The experiment was tried and succeeded. The English and the Dutch followed in this respect, as in her other colonial follies and enormities, the example of Spain.

They were at that time the wisest and the most religious nations of the world. One of them had just conquered her independence and her freedom, the other was preparing for the long contest which ended in the British Constitution; but they had no more scruples about enslaving heathens than they had about enslaving horses.

These opinions, however, though they enabled the British settler to kidnap or purchase, and work to death, without compunction, the natives of Africa, did not justify retaining in servitude their children born in Barbadoes or Virginia, whom it was obviously his duty to educate as Christians, and, therefore, as equals in the sight of God to himself.

Another prejudice came to the aid of the planter's cupidity, and enabled him, as he thought, to reconcile his interests and his religion. The Bible was at that time considered by all, as it is now by many, as a single book, every word of which had been dictated by God. Little distinction was made between what Moses was forced by the hardness of his countrymen's hearts to tolerate, and what was a moral rule of general and eternal obligation. The laws which we now perceive to have been temporarily laid down for the guidance of semi-barbarians living under a theocracy, were then supposed to be also addressed to the fellow-countrymen and contemporaries of Bacon and Milton. Some of the New England States extracted from Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy their municipal code, and fancied that they thus obtained

institutions wiser than any that man could invent.* Among these institutions was domestic slavery; palliated indeed in some respects when the slave was a Hebrew, but in others carried to its worst abuses.

If thou buy an Hebrew servant, says the Book of Exodus, six years he shall serve, and the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid servant, she shall not go out as the men servants do. If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.†

Of the heathen that are round about you, says the Book of Leviticus, shall ye buy bond men and bond maids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families which they begat in your land, and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bond men for ever.‡

* This error has been admirably illustrated by Archbishop Whately. 'Christians acknowledge that the Mosaic Dispensation came from God; and that that, and also the Christian Dispensation, are contained in the volume which we call the Bible. Now any one who regards the Bible (as many Christians do) as *one book*, containing divine instructions, without having formed any clear notions of what does and does not belong to each dispensation, will of course fall into the greatest confusion of thought. He will be like a man who should have received from his father, at various times, a great number of letters, containing directions as to his conduct from the time when he was a little child just able to read till he was a grown man, and who should lay by these letters with care and reverence, but in a confused heap, and should take up any one of them at random and read it without reference to its *date* whenever he needed his father's instructions how to act.'—*Third Dissertation prefixed to Encyclopædia Britannica*, pp. 509, 510.

† Exodus xxi. 2, 4, 7, 20, 21.

‡ Leviticus xxv. 44–46.

It is impossible to deny that the law of Moses tolerated domestic slavery, that it tolerated the separation of families, and that it punished beating a slave to death only if he or she died under the infliction, or within a day or two after it.

Defoe was a man of eminent piety. He carries his hero, Colonel Jack, to Virginia, and leads him through all the gradations of colonial life from the state of a servant to that of an owner of slaves and plantations. He dwells on the wickedness of ill-treating slaves, but does not seem to have suspected that there could be anything wrong in buying, or keeping, or selling them.

One hundred and fifty years of peace and good government humanised and enlightened the stern bigoted Puritans and Catholics of our Western empire. The children of its aristocracy came to England for education; they came to a country which boasted that its air could be breathed only by freemen. When they travelled on the Continent, they found slavery confined to its semi-barbarous districts, to its Sclavonic and Asiatic populations, — to Russia, Poland, and Turkey. They were told everywhere, and they must have felt it to be true, that the relation of master and slave was mischievous to both parties, hardening the heart, worrying the temper, and weakening the self-control of the one, and degrading the other into a brute, with all the vices of a man, and few virtues except the abject submission and unreasoning affectionateness of a dog.

The opinion grew that such an institution, though it

might be Judaic, could scarcely be Christian; and by the time that the American colonies had achieved their independence, nearly all their great men had become earnest abolitionists. When, in the 14th of May, 1787, the Federal Convention met in Philadelphia to form a Constitution, the State of Massachusetts had already abolished slavery, and New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Rhode Island had provided for its gradual extinction by giving freedom to all future-born persons. Washington, though a slave-holder, declared that his suffrage in favour of the abolition of slavery should not be wanted. Franklin was president of an Abolition Society. Jefferson proposed, that by the Constitution slavery should be excluded from any territory to be subsequently acquired by the Union; a proposal which, if it had been carried, as it was within a single vote, would probably by this time have extinguished it: and Madison succeeded in excluding from the Constitution the word 'slave,' lest it should be supposed that the idea of property in man was sanctioned by the American nation.

Two interests, however, united in favour of slavery. The agriculturists of the South threatened to secede from the Union if they were deprived of the population which afforded them the only means of cultivating their rice and indigo. The maritime towns of New England believed that their prosperity depended on their retaining the American slave trade and the American carrying trade. A coalition between the South and a part of the

North was formed, with slavery, slave trade, and a navigation law on its banner, which the delegates from the remaining States thought it dangerous to resist.

But it was supposed that the evil, though it must be submitted to for a time, might be rendered temporary. It was then believed that slavery depended on the slave trade. The laws which regulate the increase of mankind were little understood: the fear of depopulation was general, and it was plausibly maintained that a race transplanted from another hemisphere and a different soil and climate, engaged in unhealthy occupations, and subjected to the depressing influence of slavery, would gradually die out, if it received no reinforcements. A clause was introduced into the Constitution, forbidding Congress to abolish the slave trade within twenty years, and thereby impliedly giving it power to do so at the end of that period. This satisfied the Northern capitalists, to whom twenty years seemed an eternity. It pleased the South, as it enabled them to extend their cultivation and increase their gangs of negroes for nearly a quarter of a century, at the end of which time, if the slave trade were abolished, their estates and their slaves would enjoy a monopoly, since no fresh negroes could be introduced, and therefore, as they believed, no additional lands reclaimed.

The abolitionists felt that they were prolonging a national disgrace and a national crime; but they were convinced (as everyone else was convinced) that at the

end of the twenty years the slave trade must cease, and that slavery would not long survive it.

We have said that Madison succeeded in excluding from the constitution the *word* 'slavery;' but it was thought necessary, with respect to three matters, to notice the *thing*. Two of these subjects were connected. They were, direct taxation and representation in the House of Representatives. It was agreed that these should both depend on population — that is to say, that each State should be taxed and represented according to its population.

The South maintained that, for the purpose of taxation slaves should be unnoticed — being not persons but chattels; but that for the purpose of representation they should be counted, being, though chattels, chattels human. As a compromise, it was decided that, for both purposes, three slaves should be equivalent to two freemen. A compromise which now gives to the owners of three millions of slaves a representation equal to that to which two millions of freemen would have been entitled.

The third matter respected fugitive slaves. 'Every person,' says the Constitution, 'held to service or labour in one State by the laws thereof' (the euphemism for a slave), 'escaping to another, shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service is due.'

It does not appear that either this enactment, or an Act of Congress passed in the year 1793, which attempted to define the procedure by which it was to be enforced,

produced much effect. The surrender was to be made through the instrumentality of the State in which the fugitive was found. Such a duty is a disgusting one. It is difficult to obtain its performance even as respects criminals. Though several years ago England engaged, by a solemn treaty, to deliver up to the French authorities Frenchmen accused of serious crimes, the French have not been able up to this time to obtain from us, in a single instance, the performance of the engagement. Everyone admits that the stipulations of the treaty are wise, indeed necessary; but the case for the time being before the court is never within them. Some States declined to pay any expenses incurred by their officers in the execution of the law. In others, the magistrates neglected to put it in force. A judge of the Supreme Court of Vermont refused to admit any evidence of ownership, 'unless the master could show a bill of sale from the Almighty.'

In the meantime the slave trade was abolished. Indigo and rice, the great staples of the slave States, were produced more cheaply in India; and it seemed probable that the Southern States would follow the example of their northern brethren, and emancipate their slaves, and thus fulfil the prophecy that the extinction of slavery would follow that of the slave trade.

Whitney, an obscure mechanic of Massachusetts, falsified these expectations, by inventing, in 1793, the saw-gin.

The long-fibred, or, in commercial language, long-

staple cotton, of which the Sea Island is the best known variety, is cultivated with difficulty, and only on comparatively few soils. Much more than nine-tenths of the whole annual crop consists of the short-staple varieties. In these varieties the seed adheres so closely to the wool that, if they were to be separated by the hand, a man could not clean more than a pound a day. And even with the assistance of the rollers and the bow, which are now used for this purpose in India, and until Whitney's invention, were employed in America, the expense is so great that scarcely any — we believe, indeed, none — of this cotton was exported from America while that process was necessary. The whole export in 1793 was only 187,000 lbs., probably consisting exclusively of long-staple cotton. The saw-gin was introduced, and in 1794, the very next year, the export was about decupled — it rose to 1,601,760 lbs. The next year it advanced to 6,276,300 lbs.; in 1800, it was 17,789,803 lbs.; in 1810, it was 93,261,462 lbs.; and in 1852, the last year for which we have the returns before us, the export of the short-staple variety alone exceeded one thousand one hundred millions of pounds.

The cotton plant flourishes best in alluvial lands in the neighbourhood of the sea, and cannot endure a mean summer temperature lower than 77° Fahrenheit, or a mean annual temperature lower than 60°. On the Atlantic coast of America, the 35th parallel, and towards the western coast, the 39th, are the most northern latitudes in which it can be cultivated. But no climate is too hot

for it. The south-west of Texas, where the mean summer heat is 85°, suits it well. It belongs, therefore, to climates and to soils unfavourable to the constitutions of men of northern descent, if out-door work be required from them. In such climates field labour is disagreeable to all men, and dangerous to whites.

If the Anglo-Americans had been in the situation of an European community, surrounded by powerful nations, and subject to the restraints of international law and of international morality, South Carolina and Georgia, the only cotton-producing districts of the original Confederation, would soon have been fully peopled. Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Delaware,—in all of which the white man can work,—would have followed the example of the Northern States, and have gradually emancipated their slaves. Slavery would have been confined to the two Southern States, and would have existed in the mitigated form in which it was seen in our West Indian islands; the cause, of course, of occasional cruelty and of constant oppression and degradation, but free from the worst of all the abominations of modern American slavery, the breeding and exporting system,—the system under which the principal use made of men and women is to produce and bring up children, to be torn from them as soon as they attain the age of sale, and never to be seen or heard of again.

But the neighbours of the United States were dependencies of distant empires or semi-barbarous or barbarous republics. France sold to them all her subjects and all

her territories in Louisiana. Spain sold to them Florida. The vast territories which now form Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, were in the possession of their aborigines, Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles, to whom they had for the most part been guaranteed by treaty. But what is the value of a treaty between the weak and the strong, in a country in which the very name of international morality is unknown? The Indians were removed to the north, and a district three times as large as the British Islands was added to the Southern States. Texas was a portion of the defenceless incoherent Mexican republic. American speculators swarmed into it, and got up a rebellion against the central authority. The American Government acknowledged the rebels as an independent nation, and immediately accepted from them a cession of the country. Mexico remonstrated, and was punished for her insolent want of submission by war, defeat, and mutilation.

The United States were thus more than doubled in extent, and, what was more important as respects slavery, the greater part of the newly-acquired territory was so nearly tropical as to be better suited to the coloured races than to the white. Their first acquisition, Louisiana, was already a slave country; so was Florida; but the Mexican Government had abolished slavery in all its dominions, and a negro slave never had existed in the Indian country, except in a few instances among the Cherokees. As soon, therefore, as the Union was to be increased by the introduction of new States, the question arose whether slaves

should be excluded from a soil which, so far as it was peopled, was peopled by freemen. It was first tried in the case of Missouri. The contest began in 1818, and lasted for three years. Twice the House of Representatives voted the exclusion of slaves from the new State. Twice the Senate, which assumes to be the Conservative portion of the American Legislature, and, like its brethren in Europe, is the patron of every old prejudice and abuse, voted their admission. At length the anti-slavery party were deluded into accepting what was called the Missouri compromise, by which Missouri was received as a slave State, but the existing Congress affected to bind their successors by enacting that in future slavery should not be established to the north of latitude 36° 30′.

To understand this contest, we must remember that, in 1808, the African slave trade had ceased. Up to that time it had been vigorously prosecuted. Between 1790 and 1810 the number of slaves increased from 697,897 to 1,191,364, notwithstanding the emancipation of about 120,000 negroes in the Northern States, and notwithstanding the preponderance of males which is incidental to every migration, voluntary or compulsory. An almost unlimited supply of slaves ceased nearly at the time that the acquisition of a new nearly tropical empire produced an almost unlimited demand.

Few of our readers can be ignorant of the means by which that demand was met. It was met by a new slave trade, more cruel, more degrading, more atrocious, than that which had been abolished. The total number of

slaves in Virginia in 1840 was 448,886. During the ten years ending 1850 the slave population of the United States increased at the rate of 28 per cent. The number of slaves in Virginia, therefore, in 1850, ought to have been 574,574; it was only 473,026. Instead of increasing at the rate of 28 per cent., the slaves in Virginia increased at the rate of only 5½ per cent. Instead of adding 125,688 to their numbers, they added only 24,140. What became of the missing 101,548? It cannot be answered that they were not born, or that they died. The climate of Virginia is one of the best in the world; the labour in the plantations is light; the negroes are well taken care of. Every traveller admires the number of healthy children. If the natural increase of the slaves in the whole Union was 28 per cent., that in Virginia was probably 35 or 40 per cent.

The question, what became of the missing 101,548, is answered when we look at the rate of increase in the States which are consumers instead of breeders, when we find that in Louisiana the increase was 44 per cent, in Missisippi 57 per cent, and in Arkansas 135 per cent. It is to these States and to Texas, Alabama, and Florida, that Virginia has exported her human crop; it is from them that she has received, at the low average price of 500 dollars per head, fifty millions of dollars for her 100,000 souls. It was to preserve this trade, that Mexico was robbed of Texas, and afterwards of California and New Mexico; that Cuba is to be snatched and Jamaica to be annexed; and that every new State in which the climate is

suited to the negro is admitted unto the Union as a slave State.

Few things have more surprised the world than the deterioration of the political men of America. When the United States were a mere aggregate of scantily-peopled colonies,—when their principal citizens were planters, shopkeepers, and traders, trained up in the narrowness and prejudices and petty employments of provincial life, they produced statesmen, and negotiators, and administrators, and legislators, whose names will be for ever illustrious in history. Now that they form a great empire, that they possess a large class of men born in opulence, to whom all the schools and universities of each hemisphere are open, who have leisure to pursue the studies and to acquire the habits of political life, few of their public men would pass in Europe for tolerable second-rates. This downward progress, however, seems now likely to be arrested. We do not expect to see the present tenant of the White House succeeded by a first magistrate inferior to himself in knowledge, in ability, or in statesmanship, or the American diplomatists now resident in the Courts of the Continent, followed by men of less tact, or temper, or good sense.

We believe that the explanation of this strange depravation is to be found in the influence on American parties of the political questions connected with slavery.

A party which aims at producing only one result by only one means, has an enormous advantage over its rivals, who seek to promote the general welfare of their country.

Sincerely patriotic parties are necessarily divided. Though they cannot but agree as to the end that is ultimately to be attained, it is equally certain that they will differ as to the means that are to be employed. Their common purpose is one that can be effected only imperfectly. It is composed of many elements, some of them opposed to others; the conduct which promotes the public prosperity in one respect may impede it in another. A public man has to choose often between irreconcilable advantages, often between incompatible evils. It was difficult to predict the consequences of a new measure, and still more difficult to find believers in the prediction. It is very seldom, therefore, that two parties, each of which desires above all things the general good government of the country, can coalesce. Each is wedded by original disposition, by association, by habit, and by the desire of consistency, to opinions and measures inconsistent with those to which the other is equally chained.

The selfish single-purposed party, to which general politics are indifferent, which is ready to ally itself to Freetraders or to Protectionists, to Reformers or to Anti-Reformers, to Puseyites or to Dissenters, becomes powerful by becoming unscrupulous. If Ireland had been an independent country, separated from England, the Ultra-Catholic party, whose only object is the domination of the Clergy and of the Pope, would have ruled her. This is a source of the influence of a similar party in France. The Clerical, or Jesuit, or Popish, or Ultramontane faction,—whatever name we give to it,—has almost always obtained

its selfish objects, because those objects are all that it cares for. It supported the Restoration, its priests blessed the insurgents of February 1848, and it now worships Louis Napoleon. The only condition which it makes is Ecclesiastical and Popish supremacy, and that condition the Governor for the time being of France usually accepts.

Such a party is the Southern party in the United States, Its only object is the retention and extension of slavery and of the internal slave trade. For this purpose, it is ready to ally itself to Whigs or to Tories, to Democrats or to Federalists, to those who wish to raise, or to those who wish to lower, the tariff. But this is a purpose which must excite the fears of every wise man and the detestation of every honest man. All the best men of America, therefore, resist the contamination of such an alliance. They see that the Southern faction, by choosing its opportunities, by joining from time to time the party that will accept its terms and can triumph by means of its assistance, generally obtains its objects, rewards its favourites, and excludes its opponents: most of them are discouraged, and forsake political life for literature or business, or foreign travel; others are cut short in their public career, and forced to resign themselves to provincial or professional eminence. A few acquire fame in the Senate or in the House of Representatives, but are excluded from office. And what, on this side of the Atlantic, are the prizes of public life, the high political and administrative posts, are generally left to the inferior men, whose ignorance, violence, or incapacity have led those who judge of America only

through her public servants, to look on her with unmerited contempt or disgust.

We say 'unmerited,' because we believe that the public morality of the educated classes in America, who take no part in politics, is generally far superior to that of the great bulk of her statesmen. For the proof of this, we need not go further than to 'Uncle Tom' itself. It is a purely American work. When it first appeared in the columns of a newspaper, the author looked only to a narrow local circulation. When it was reprinted, the American market only was thought of. Mrs. Stowe did not address herself, like Washington Irving, or Prescott, or Wheaton, to a European public. She wrote only for Americans, and writing for them she poured out her sympathy with the weak and the humble, her indignation against the oppressor, her obedience to justice, and her adoration of liberty, in words as bold and as uncompromising as any that were ever uttered by Milton, or Fox, or Wilberforce. She does not discuss the highest principles of human conduct, she assumes them: she takes for granted that they are not only known to her readers, but professed by them. If 'Uncle Tom' were still only in manuscript, and it had been shown to us, with the information that an American lady intended to publish it in America, we should have said, 'The readers for whom that book is intended, must enjoy a high civilisation and great moral and intellectual cultivation. They must be religious, just, and humane. If they form part of an empire tainted by slavery, they must be impatient of the

disgrace, and alarmed by the sin.' And the result would have more than justified us, as it has more than justified Mrs. Stowe.

We must admit, however, that Mrs. Stowe, writing from personal observation, draws a dark picture of the influence of slavery, and of the slave trade on a portion of her countrymen who take no part in active political life.

We copy a part of one of her letters, dated Paris, August, 1853:—

There is one thing which cannot but make one indignant here in Paris, and which, I think, is keenly felt by some of the best among the French; and that is the indifference of many Americans, while here, to their own national principles of liberty. They seem to come to Paris merely to be hangers on and applauders in the train of the man who has overthrown the hopes of France. To all that cruelty and injustice by which thousands of hearts are now bleeding, they appear entirely insensible. They speak with heartless levity of the revolutions of France, as of a pantomime got up for their diversion. Their time and thoughts seem to be divided between defences of American slavery and efforts to attach themselves to the skirts of French tyranny. They are the parasites of parasites—delighted if they can but get to an imperial ball, and beside themselves if they can secure an introduction. Noble-minded men of all parties here, who have sacrificed all for principle, listen with suppressed indignation while young America, fresh from the theatres and gambling saloons, declares, between the whiffs of his cigar, that the French are not capable of free institutions, and that the government of Louis Napoleon is the best thing that France could have. *Thus, from the plague-spot at her heart, has America become the propagandist of despotism in Europe.* Nothing weighs so fearfully against the cause of the people of Europe as this kind of American influence. Through almost every city of Europe are men whose great glory it appears to be to proclaim that they worship the

beast and bear his name in their foreheads. I have seen sometimes, in the forests, a vigorous young sapling which had sprung up from the roots of an old, decaying tree. So, unless the course of things alters much in America, a purer civil liberty will spring up from her roots in Europe, while her national tree is blasted with despotism.*

Our own experience does not enable us to confirm Mrs. Stowe. The Americans with whom we have been sufficiently intimate to enable us to ascertain their political opinions have been enlightened and liberal men, who differed from us, so far as they differed from us at all, rather by their republican, than by their despotic, tendencies. They were in general partisans of the revolution of 1848, and looked forward with hope to the triumph of the Montagne in 1852. Most of them approved of the Hungarian insurrection, and, in their vehement detestation of Austria, seemed to wish to see her join Russia against England and France, in the hope that we might attack her by an Italian rebellion. Others were so indignant at the prevalence of despotism throughout the Continent as to expect with pleasure a general revolutionary war. Mrs. Stowe's experience is much wider than ours, which is, in fact, confined to nine or ten individuals. She probably came across ten times as many. We do not venture to question the acuteness of her observation, or the accuracy of her report.

We must add that the sympathy with Russia which has been manifested by some of the inhabitants of the Southern States, supports Mrs. Stowe's remark, that the

* 'Sunny Memories.'

defenders of slavery in America naturally become the enemies of freedom in Europe. The good sense and the liberality of the opinions of a neutral may generally be tested by the side which his wishes take in the present war.

The people, that is to say, the mass of the inhabitants of Europe, are anti-Russian. There are, indeed, among the Poles, Italians, and Hungarians, men whose hatred of Austria leads them to desire her defeat and humiliation at any expense. They know that if Russia succeeds, Austria loses her independence. Some of them probably hope that she will be partitioned, and that Russia will create out of her wreck a new semi-Russian kingdom of Poland, and a new semi-Russian kingdom of Hungary, and will allow Italy a quasi-independence under her Protectorate. And they are mad enough to prefer the scorpions of Russia to the whips of Austria.

But these fanatics form a small minority. The people of Europe are, we repeat, anti-Russian. They see that wherever Russian power, or even Russian influence extends, it brings with it repression, ignorance, religious intolerance, the slavery of the press, commercial restriction, and every other oppression by which improvement can be arrested and Europe forced back into a barbarism worse than that of the dark ages, as the barbarism of communities that have once been civilised is more corrupt and more hopeless than that of a race that still retains, like our Saxon ancestors, the vigour and independence of their still less civilised progenitors.

The Continental despots and their courtiers look forward

to Russian preponderance with expectations, similar to those of their subjects; but, with the intense selfishness which belongs to power ill acquired or ill used, the greater part of them desire it on the very grounds on which their subjects dread it. They believe as the Russian Government itself believes, that knowledge, toleration, self-respect, freedom of the press, freedom of trade, freedom of intercourse,—in short, all that raises man intellectually and morally, is favourable to the object of their hatred and terror, political liberty. Hence their love of Russia, as the type and the supporter of what they call order,—as their faithful ally in their struggle against improvement,—as the great and generous friend, whose ready sympathy can be always relied on by a king, or a prince, or a grand duke, at variance with his subjects, and whose active aid will be given as soon as the interference of England and France is no longer to be feared.

The slave holders and slave traders of America are too strong to need to look for assistance to Russia; but they sympathise with her partly for some of the reasons which govern the petty tyrants of Italy and Germany, and partly for reasons of their own. They hate England as abolitionist, as Ferdinand hates her as liberal. They love Russia, as he does, for her intolerance of liberty and knowledge. And there is between the two countries the strong bond of similarity of institutions. Russia and the Southern States of the American Union are the only civilised slave-holders left in the world. Slavery in Russia is indeed far milder, and far less diffused, and it is

gradually wearing out. But while it lasts Southern America has the countenance of one companion.

As an illustration of the prevalent feeling, we copy from a New Orleans paper of the 15th January, 1855, the following extract from a speech addressed by the Rev. Ch. R. Marshall, Chairman of the Committee of Education, to a convention of delegates from the Southern States.

The speaker reprobated the practice of educating Southern children in the North.

Our sons and daughters (he said) return to us with their minds poisoned by fanatical teachings and influences against the institution of slavery.

The reverend speaker (continues the reporter) then considered slavery as an institution, and passed upon it a glowing eulogium as contributing to the glory in arts and sciences, in religion, and national prosperity, in all countries wherein it has ever existed. He described it as forming a part of the patriarchal system of government, established by God himself, as having been countenanced by Christ, and argumentatively sustained and practically supported by the chief of Christ's Apostles, St. Paul. He (the speaker) had proclaimed these opinions in the streets of New York, and of Boston. He believed slavery to be right, and that within fifty years, instead of decreasing, it would be double in extent to what it now is. He believed that the colonies now gathering on the coast of Africa would all be Slave States.

In the course of his speech (adds the reporter) Mr. Marshall, commenting on the hostility of England towards our institutions, drew forth loud demonstrations of applause by expressing the hope, very earnestly, that the Czar would triumph in the pending war in the East.

We return from this digression to the great subject of 'Uncle Tom,'—the most striking, though perhaps not the

most important, of the recent triumphs of the Southern party,—the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

We have seen that little effect was given to the clause in the Constitution directing that 'persons held to service in one State and escaping to another shall be delivered up to the party to whom such service was due.' The disinclination of the local authorities in the Free States to enforce the law against a fugitive, the evidence as to the claimant's title, as to the servitude of the person claimed, and as to his identity, which they vexatiously required—the protection and concealment, and often the active assistance, which he received from the religious and the humane,—and the expense of the legal proceedings, and of the escort which was sometimes necessary to prevent a rescue on the road, and to detain the fugitive at night, were the chief obstacles to the efficiency of the Act of 1793.

The Act of 1850 endeavours to remove them. It directs the circuit Courts of the United States to appoint Commissioners, 'with a view to afford reasonable facilities to reclaim fugitives from labour.'

It enacts that the owner of a fugitive or his agent may pursue and reclaim him, either by obtaining a warrant, or by himself seizing and arresting him, and may then take him before a commissioner, whose duty it shall be to determine the case *summarily*, and, on proof by deposition or affidavit of the title of the claimant, and the identity of the fugitive, to grant to the claimant a certificate, which shall authorise the claimant or his agent to remove such

fugitive back to the State whence he or she escaped. 'IN NO TRIAL OR HEARING, UNDER THIS ACT,' it continues, 'SHALL THE TESTIMONY OF SUCH ALLEGED FUGITIVE BE ADMITTED IN EVIDENCE.'

On affidavit of the claimant, or of his agent, that he fears a rescue, an officer of the court is bound to undertake the removal of the fugitive to the State whence he escaped, and to require such assistance as he may think necessary, and is to be repaid all his expenses out of the treasury of the United States.

The marshals and deputy marshals of the United States are bound to assist under a penalty of 1,000 dollars, and are liable in the full value of the fugitive if he escapes from them. The persons executing the Act are directed to call in aid all bystanders and the *posse comitatus*, and all good citizens are commanded to assist them.

The commissioner is paid by fees, *and receives* 10 *dollars if he grants his certificate, but only* 5 *if he refuses it.*

Every person obstructing a claimant, or attempting to rescue a fugitive, or harbouring, or concealing, or assisting him or her, directly or indirectly, to escape, is, for each such offence, to pay to the United States a fine of 1,000 dollars, and to be imprisoned for six months, and moreover is to pay by way of civil damages to the owner 1,000 dollars for each slave thereby lost to him.

Lastly, any owner of a fugitive slave may apply to any Court of Record in his State, whereupon the judge, on being satisfied as to the ownership, and the slave's escape,

is to make a record of the facts, and a description of the fugitive, and to deliver to the applicant a transcript of such record. 'Which transcript,' says the Act, 'shall be held and taken to be full and conclusive evidence of the fact of the escape, and that the service or labour of the person escaping is due to the party therein mentioned.' The production of this transcript, together with other evidence, *if necessary*, of the identity of the person claimed, to a commissioner in any other State, entitles the claimant to a certificate, authorising him to seize or arrest and transport the person claimed to the State from whence he escaped.

No time is a bar. A man who has been settled for thirty years in a northern city, who has a family and a profession, who has forgotten that he ever was in bondage, or perhaps who never *was* in bondage, may be dragged before a commissioner, bribed by a double fee to condemn him, and, on affidavit that *A. B.* is a slave, and that he is *A. B.*, may, without being heard in his defence, for the Act expressly declares that he shall *not* be heard, be *summarily* sent into slavery for life.

Even this mockery of a trial is not necessary. Under the last clause in the Act, *A. B.* living in Charlestown, hearing that there is in Philadelphia one *C. D.*, whom he would like to appropriate, has only to go to the Charleston Court, and obtain a transcript of a record describing *C. D.*, and stating that he is *A. B.*'s fugitive slave. On showing this transcript in Philadelphia, and making oath as to *C. D.*'s identity, he is entitled to a Philadelphian certificate,

with which he may proceed to *C. D.*'s house, and without warning, summons, or trial, seize him, bind him, gag him, and carry him as a slave to Charleston.

America calls herself free, but such oppression is not to be found in Naples or in Russia. What security has any coloured person, what security indeed has any white person, under such a law as this? — under a law by which he can be declared a slave in his absence, on an *ex parte* application, and receive the first notice that his freedom has been questioned from those who handcuff him as a slave?

It is said that the Southern States frightened the Northern States into acquiescence, by threatening, if their monstrous bill were rejected, to renounce the Union. We cannot understand how such a threat should have been effectual. Had we been Northerns, *we* should have used it, and we should have acted on it, instead of submitting to it. We should have said, 'Rather than be the accomplices and the victims of such a tyranny, we separate. We are already a great nation, in a few years we shall be a great empire, free from a stain which debases us at home and disgraces us abroad.'

We say the *victims*, as well as the accomplices, for under the provisions of this law by what tenure does an American hold his freedom? What stands between him and slavery? Not a trial, not a regularly constituted court, not the verdict of a jury, not an appeal, not even a writ of habeas corpus. He may be torn from his home, from his friends, and from his family, and subjected to a punishment far worse than the scaffold of Robespierre or

the knout of Nicholas, by a procedure, and on evidence, which in England we should not think sufficient to decide the title to a dog, or to warrant the stopping up of a footpath.

The penalties on aiding or concealing a fugitive, or directly or indirectly obstructing a slave hunter, must render anxious the life of every man of common humanity who lives near the line of a fugitive's escape. Those penalties are, to men of the moderate fortunes common in America, absolutely ruinous. Yet who, when he rises in the morning, can say that he shall not render himself liable to them in the course of the day or of the night? Few Englishmen,—we hope few Americans,—who had to choose between the incurring those penalties and the turning out a fugitive helpless before his pursuers, would hesitate. But what can be said of the freedom of a country which has submitted to a law which exposes all its citizens to the alternative of imprisonment and ruin, or of eternal unavailing remorse.*

We have said that 'Uncle Tom' is, in fact, under the disguise of a novel, a pamphlet against the Fugitive Slave Law. Such is Mrs. Stowe's account of it.

For many years of her life (she says) the author avoided all reading upon, or allusion to, the subject of slavery, considering it too painful to be inquired into, and one which advancing light and civilisation would certainly live down. But, since the Act of 1850, when she heard with consternation Christian and humane people actually recommending the remanding escaped fugitives into slavery as a duty binding on good citizens; when she heard

* See Note I.

on all sides from kind, compassionate, and estimable people in the free States of the North, deliberations and discussions as to what Christian duty could be on this head,—she could only think, these men and Christians do not know what slavery is; if they did, such a question could never be open for discussion. And from this arose a desire to exhibit it in a living dramatic reality. She has endeavoured to show it fairly in its best and in its worst phases. In its best aspect she has perhaps been successful: but oh, who shall say what yet remains untold in that valley and shadow of death that lies on the other side? *

Its political influence has been little less remarkable than its literary success. Though the Fugitive Slave Law excited the indignation of many persons belonging to the higher classes in the Free States, it was not unpopular among the people. The contempt, the loathing, with which the coloured race is avoided in those States, deprives of all public sympathy every one that is suspected of being stained by the least drop of black blood. No one, who has not been raised by a better education far above ordinary prejudices, looks on a negro, or on the descendant of a negro, as a fellow-creature. For the first two years after the passing of the Act, the lower classes in New York and Boston enjoyed the excitement of a negro hunt as much as our rustics enjoy following a fox hunt. Nor is it likely that the mere reading of the novel would have much affected them. But it was dramatised and acted in the Bowery Theatre in New York. The hero and heroine of the piece were Eliza and George. The great scene was Eliza's passage up the Ohio. It was

* Chapter xlv.

well got up and well acted. When she leapt the turbid torrent, and dashed over the cracking ice, leaving her amazed pursuers on the bank, the theatre rung and rung with applause. For one hundred and fifty successive nights this scene was acted in New York, and we have no doubt that it was repeated in the other Free States. The sovereign people was converted; public sympathy turned in favour of the slave. A few months ago a fugitive was claimed in Boston and remanded to slavery. Such was the fear of a rescue, that all the national army that could be collected—a tenth, we believe, of the whole military force of the Union—was called out. Files of infantry with loaded muskets surrounded the court house, and lined the streets that lead from it to the wharf where the vessel that was to carry him off lay. Cannon were placed to command the cross streets, all business was suspended, the balconies were covered with black cloth, and the bells of the city tolled, as the steamer with its captive left the shore.

The attempt will not be repeated. As far as the Northern States are concerned, 'Uncle Tom' has repealed the Fugitive Slave Law.

Having related the strange story of 'Uncle Tom's' success, it is now our duty to endeavour to account for it, —to ascertain and explain the causes, intrinsic and external, which have given to it a popularity which this generation cannot deny, because it has witnessed it, but which our posterity will be tempted to treat as fabulous.

The first of these causes we believe to be the subject.

It describes the state in which millions of persons speaking our language, professing our religion, and, in many cases, not distinguished from us by colour or by feature, within a fortnight's steam of our shores, are now, at this instant, placed, and may remain placed, for an indefinite time. It is a state of which we have no experience, and which probably now exists for the first time since the creation of the world.

Of course the slavery which we describe as now existing for the first time, is that of the slave-breeding States, not that of the slave-consuming ones. The slavery of Alabama or of Texas exhibits only the ordinary and known features of slavery: heightened, perhaps, by differences of race and colour, and by the deep-seated antipathy of the American towards the black; but probably not worse, perhaps better, than that which prevailed in the last century in our own West Indian islands.

It is the slavery of Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina, which resembles nothing that was ever seen before.

The African slave trade was frightful, but its prey were savages accustomed to suffering and misery, and to endure them with patience almost amounting to apathy. The victims of the American slave trade have been bred in a highly cultivated community. Their dispositions have been softened, their intellects sharpened, and their sensibilities excited by society, by Christianity, and by all the ameliorating but enervating influences of civilisation. The savage submits to be enslaved himself, or to have his

wife or his child carried off by his enemies, as merely a calamity. His misery is not embittered by indignation. He suffers only what, if he could, he would inflict. He cannot imagine a state of society in which there shall not be masters and slaves, kidnapping and man-selling, coffles, and slave-traders; or in which any class shall be exempt from misfortunes which appear to him to be incidental to humanity.

The civilised Virginian, who can never go from his cabin with a certainty of spending another night in it; who can never part from a child with a certainty that he shall see it again; who, at any moment, without any preparation, may be told, 'Follow that man—you are sold;'—who, without fault, and without warning, has to leave a home and a family, and to pass the remainder of his life, among strangers, in a distant land, a burning climate, a pestiferous air, and perhaps under a brutal master; the Virginian wife, who sees her husband handcuffed and carried off, because his good-conduct, industry, and skill have made him so valuable that his master thinks that he cannot afford to keep him; the Virginian mother, who finds that her children, one after another, disappear, as each attains the age of sale, and the sooner in proportion to their intelligence and beauty;—feel their sense of suffering all sharpened by their sense of wrong. All around them are whites, their fellow-countrymen, their fellow-subjects, and their fellow-Christians, whose homes are inviolable, among whom the child belongs to its parents, husbands and

wives to one another, and a man to himself. To the black race alone, and to their descendants, all family ties and all security are denied; domestic affections, the greatest source of happiness to the rich, almost the only source of happiness to the poor, are to them converted into instruments of torture, into the causes of constant anxious terror, and of occasional anguish and desolation.

In Europe we are all aware of the existence of the causes of these abominations; but, until we were roused by 'Uncle Tom,' we had not, to use a convenient Americanism, 'realised their results.' We wanted no 'Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin' to convince us, that if the laws of a country place two races in the relation of proprietor and property; if the race which is property is more cheaply propagated and raised in one part of that country, and more profitably worked in another; no obstacle, raised merely by benevolence or by pity, can prevent the human stream from seeking to find its level, from flowing from the territories in which man is abundant and cheap, to those in which he is scarce and dear. But though we possessed the outline of the scene, we wanted its colouring and details. These Mrs. Stowe has given to us; her pictures carry with them the excitement of novelty as well as the weight of truth. The great authoress has put into our hands a telescope, by which the coloured races are brought so near to us, that we can see them in their labours and in their sports, in their sufferings and in their enjoyments, in their insecure happiness—if any state that is insecure deserve to be called happiness—in their terrors, and in their

despair. We do not wonder at the crowds that have been collected by a spectacle so strange without being surprising; so unlike anything that ever was seen before and yet so obviously real.

This accounts for the difference between the fortunes of 'Uncle Tom,' and of Colonel Senior's remarkable novel 'Charles Vernon.'* 'Charles Vernon' was as graphic and as accurate a representation of slavery in Jamaica, as 'Uncle Tom' is of slavery in America. But Colonel Senior described slavery not as it is now, but as it was forty years ago. Events similar to those which he painted had long ceased to occur, at least in the country in which his scenes were laid. His picture was valuable to the historian, and interesting to the moral observer; but it wanted the present reality of 'Uncle Tom.' The reader of 'Charles Vernon' was instructed and amused, but he was not excited. The reader of 'Uncle Tom' is roused to action. He feels that if he can contribute anything—and there are few who can contribute nothing—towards abating, or even mitigating, the monstrous system that is exposed before him, he is guilty if he remains quiescent.

Next in importance to the attractiveness of the subject is the attractiveness of the moral colouring with which Mrs. Stowe has lighted it up. The reader always sympathises with the writer, and always feels himself the better for doing so. It is difficult for a poet not to paint himself while he thinks that he is describing only the creatures of

* Ante, p. 189.

his imagination. No one can read 'Amelia,' or 'Persuasion,' without seeing who sat for the principal character. We rise from 'Don Quixote' as well acquainted with Cervantes as with the knight of the rueful countenance. This is peculiarly the case with Mrs. Stowe, as her work is as much a piece of rhetoric as of poetry—in fact, is more so. She is more anxious to persuade than she is to please. The moral, which is absent from most poems, and, where it exists, generally so concealed as to be discovered only on reflection, is prominently exhibited in every chapter of 'Uncle Tom.'

Now it has been admitted from the times of Aristotle, that the great instrument of an orator is the ἦθος τοῦ λέγοντος; that the speaker whom you believe to be sincere, and with whose feelings you sympathise, has already half persuaded you. 'Uncle Tom' possesses both these means of influence, and each in its highest excellence. It is obviously an honest book. Some of the answerers of Mrs. Stowe accuse her of having overcoloured her pictures. Admitting her to have done so, no candid reader can think that she has done so intentionally. There is nothing exaggerated or artificial in her loathing of cruelty, in her indignation at oppression, or in her scorn of the wretched sophistry with which they are palliated or even defended. Her descriptions and her declamation are as much the relief of a mind which seeks vent for the sense of misery and wrong, as they are among the means by which that misery and wrong may be mitigated.

And the reader can no more refuse to her his sympathy

than he can his confidence. She has all the loftier and all the humbler virtues. She is bold, high-minded, and enthusiastic. She is kind, tender, and affectionate. And over her character is spread a tint of piety which softens and refines and harmonises the whole. New Englander as she is, there is nothing austere or ascetic, or menacing in her religion. It is a religion of hope and of love, not of fear or of denunciation. Present assistance and future reward are constantly promised: temptation and punishment are kept out of sight. Our Saviour appears in every page; the existence of Satan is almost ignored, except, indeed, when she makes the negroes assign to him the duty of taking the slave traders who tear children from their parents. 'For if the devil don't get them, what he good for?' No sectarian doctrine, no sectarian feeling intrudes. If we did not know that 'Uncle Tom' has been prohibited by the Pope, we should have supposed that there was no form of Christian faith in which it would not find grateful admirers.

Its defect, in the eyes of his Holiness, was perhaps the omission of the especial object of his adoration, the Madonna. If Mrs. Stowe had been a Romanist, the Madonna would have taken the place of Jesus Christ: the majestic vision 'as of one crowned with thorns, buffeted and bleeding,' which to Protestants seems a bold, almost a rash invention, would have been turned into the Queen of Heaven, glorious and triumphant; and would have passed among Roman Catholic readers as a real and probable incident.

It is possible, too, that the Papal authorities were alarmed by hearing of one of the effects produced by the work in Paris—a general demand, among the ouvriers, for bibles. The bouquinists have assured us that during the year 1853 they were the books most in request. All the stalls were full of them; and the purchasers, to most of whom the book was unknown, asked anxiously whether what they were buying was the 'real bible,'—'Uncle Tom's bible?'

When we give the first place, among the causes of Uncle Tom's popularity, to its subject, we speak of its European popularity. We believe that the principal cause of its American popularity, was its religious colour. In the New England States there is a general dislike, or rather a general dread, of works of fiction. Among Puritans, the fear of evil predominates over the hope of good. Any source of pleasure, which may also be a source of pain, is prohibited. They think it safer, perhaps easier, to be abstinent than to be temperate. Novels give much amusement, and good novels give some instruction; but the reading, even of good novels, is easily carried to an excess which is always injurious to the mind, and often to the character. A total abstinence, therefore, from novel reading pervades New England.

The anti-slavery of 'Uncle Tom' (says a Boston critic) rather hurt it than otherwise; and, in spite of all its remarkable merits of execution, but for its appeal to the religious sensibilities of Christendom, its admirable realisation of the popular ideal of the Christian hero, saint, and martyr, it would, perhaps, scarcely have been known out of the small circle of anti-slavery readers, or, at

least, the not large circle of novel readers, instead of sweeping away, as it has done, thousands upon thousands who never read a novel before in their lives, and who had even been accustomed to hold prose fictions in abomination.

Even in this country in some classes, particularly among the Dissenters, novel reading is forbidden, and here, as in America, 'Uncle Tom' is excepted from the general prohibition. It is difficult for those who have not been subjected to this ascetic interdiction of works of imagination, to estimate adequately the effect of such a story on minds to which the intoxicating stimulus of fiction was unknown. It must have been to them like light given to those blind from birth,—the revelation of a new sense.

We have shown how much of the popularity of 'Uncle Tom' arises from its appealing to our sympathies. We fear that we must add that much of that popularity arises from its also appealing to our antipathies. The anti-slavery feeling in America is less diffused than it is in Europe, but it is more intense. Scarcely any man can proclaim himself an abolitionist without having to make a considerable sacrifice of popularity, perhaps of fortune. Even those who stop short of abolition, but are unfavourable to the extension of slavery into territories as yet free from it, have to play a losing game—a contest which strongly tasks the temper and the charity of the player; which may bind him closely to his own cause, but is certain to embitter him against that of his opponents; which may make him love his friends, but cannot fail to

make him hate his enemies. To men in this state of mind 'Uncle Tom' was a god-send. Mrs. Stowe came like a heavenly auxiliary, like the divine Twins at the battle of the Lake Regillus, or St. Jago in the van of Cortez, using weapons such as they had never thought of, wielded with a skill which they did not possess. She showered on the supporters of the Fugitive Slave Law and of the extension of slavery, invective, ridicule, contempt, and defiance, with arrows winged by genius, and barbed, and pointed, and poisoned by truth. The anti-slavery party would have been more than men if they had not welcomed with enthusiasm such an ally,—if they had not deified the amazon who, if she had not led them to victory, at least had given them revenge.

The evil passions which 'Uncle Tom' gratified in England were not hatred or vengeance, but national jealousy and national vanity. We have long been smarting under the conceit of America—we are tired of hearing her boast that she is the freest and the most enlightened country that the world has ever seen. Our clergy hate her voluntary system—our Tories hate her democrats—our Whigs hate her parvenus—our Radicals hate her litigiousness, her insolence, and her ambition. All parties hailed Mrs. Stowe as a revolter from the enemy. She came to us knowing all the weak points in his camp, all the gaps in his line. She taught us how to prove that democrats may be tyrants, that an aristocracy of caste is more oppressive than an aristocracy of station; and, above all, that a clergy supported by their flocks is ready to

pervert the fundamental principles of Christianity to suit the interests or the prejudices of their paymasters.

The malevolent emotions, as is the case with all our instinctive feelings, have their pleasures, but in civilised life we seldom can fully enjoy them. This explains the delight that men feel in battle. There is something intoxicating in the vent suddenly given to passions that have always been smothered, in the power suddenly acquired to kill and to plunder, to gratify anger, revenge, and rapacity, with a good conscience. Something like this is felt when the sins of a rival nation are held up to us: we revel conscientiously in the excitement of contempt and anger. Our pity for the victim is swallowed up in our hatred of the tyrant. To the gratification of our indignation we add the gratification of our pride. We look at the atrocities of the internal slave trade, and of the Fugitive Slave Law, and rejoice that no such crimes stain the British Islands. We read the laws prohibiting instruction, prohibiting the acquisition of property, and prohibiting emancipation, and congratulate ourselves on the reception which such legislation would have encountered if it had been tendered by a British colony for the approbation of a British sovereign. We thank God that 'we are not even as this publican.'

Another source of the popularity of 'Uncle Tom' is its naturalness. It has no plot, no *peripateia*. The fortunes of the different *dramatis personæ* move on in separate lines, little influencing one another, without the

elaborate entanglement and clever unravellings to which we are accustomed in fiction. The events are connected rather by time than by causation. In few incidents does the hand of the inventor betray itself; one of these is the sudden death of St. Clair after he had begun, and before he had completed, the forms necessary to the enfranchisement of Tom. It is ushered in by a note of preparation and warning, which an experienced novel reader cannot misunderstand. First, we are told that he has begun to take the necessary legal steps. Then his cousin Ophelia warns him of the calamities which may befal his favourite slaves if he should die before he has provided for their future fate. Then St. Clair laughs at her *post mortem* speculations, and revolves vast indistinct schemes of making some effort to rescue his country from the disgrace of slavery, and goes out to be back in an hour. Then Tom thinks of his home, and how soon he shall be a free man, and be able to return to it at will. He feels the muscles of his brawny arms, and rejoices that they will soon belong to himself, and work out the freedom of his family, until his meditations are cut short by those who bring back his master wounded and dying.

This long preface is too obviously artificial. Indeed, the event itself is too obviously artificial. A novelist has always the power of bringing on a catastrophe by an unexpected opportune death, but it is the very facility of this expedient that renders it objectionable. Such an accident is so frequent in fiction and so rare in reality,

that its introduction dissipates the temporary illusion which the poet endeavours to produce.

George's story is more than artificial, it is improbable. Mrs. Stowe gives to him the talents and habits of a highly educated man, and the manners and carriage of a gentleman. How he acquired advantages which in England are supposed to be the result only of early and careful cultivation, and of constant contact with equally cultivated associates, he tells us himself:

> I grew up (he says) long, long years,—no father, no mother, no sister; not a living soul that cared for me more than a dog; nothing but whipping, scolding, starving. Why, sir, I have been so hungry that I have been glad to take the bones they threw to their dogs; and yet when I was a little fellow and laid awake whole nights and cried, it was'nt the hunger; it was'nt the whipping I cried for. No, sir; it was for my mother and my sisters. It was because I had not a friend to love me upon earth. I never knew what peace and comfort was. I never had a kind word spoken to me till I came to work in your factory. Mr. Wilson, you treated me well, you encouraged me to do well, and to learn to read and write, and to try to make something of myself; and, God knows, how grateful I am for it.

A few years spent in Mr. Wilson's factory turn him out at twenty-five an accomplished man—a man whose exterior is so striking as to impress a whole company instantly with the idea of something uncommon. Either the manners of an American gentleman are much more easily acquired than those of an English one; or there must be in races enriched by negro blood a wonderful affinity for refinement.

He naturally rises to be the most useful servant in the

factory to which his owner, Harris, has hired him out. He invents machinery, for which his proprietor takes out a patent, and becomes invaluable to his immediate employers. His owner hears of his success, is indignant that a slave should be marching round the country inventing machines and holding up his head, and takes him away, in spite of remonstrances and high offers, to waste his talents and accomplishments in the lowest field drudgery.

Harris's brutal folly seems to us as unnatural as George's refinement. He has had no quarrel with his slave. For several years the only relation between them has been that he has found George a property of great and increasing value. Yet, merely out of spite at the 'smartness' of a negro, he resolves to destroy this property, and to reduce an instrument, which was worth to him perhaps 200*l.* a-year, and might become worth much more, to one scarcely paying for its keep.

Mrs. Stowe certainly produces a succession of striking pictures, by exhibiting a slave, of the highest intelligence and cultivation, exposed to the most degrading oppression; but she does it by accumulating impossibilities.

In general, however, the illusion of reality is admirably kept up. Scene after scene follows, without effort, without dulness, and without exaggeration, in which every character acts and talks as we expected him to do. One of the elements of the naturalness of the story is the absence of love; that is, of love between unmarried persons, for of conjugal love, or parental love, and of

religious love, there is abundance. Mrs. Stowe is to be added to the very small list of great poets who have attempted to interest the reader without the aid of a pair of lovers. That the attempt is an arduous one may be inferred from its rarity, and that rarity gives to 'Uncle Tom' a double advantage. The ordinary reader observes the absence of one of the badges of fiction: the critic admires the genius and the courage of the writer who has dared to compose a novel, making no use of the material which is supposed to be the staple of novel writing.

Perhaps this contributed almost as much as its piety to its reception in New England. The sorrows of husbands and wives, parents and children, were read without fear by those who would have been scared if they had been seduced into sympathy with a lover and his mistress. 'Uncle Tom' could not be excluded as a love story.

We have said that the actors in 'Uncle Tom' act and talk as we expect them to do. To recur, however, to a classification on which we ventured when reviewing Thackeray's novels,*—the characters are generally simple: that is to say, characters to whom only a few qualities are given, all of which combine to lead their possessor into one line of conduct.

Uncle Tom, for instance, is simply perfect. Not a particle of human infirmity is allowed to profane his excellence. He is pious, affectionate, brave, honest,

* Ante, p. 358.

intelligent, confiding, humble,—in short, he is composed of every Christian virtue and grace without alloy.

Eva is also perfect. Her whole character is formed of youthful love and piety.

Marie is another simple character. She is made up merely of intense selfishness and weak intelligence. Haley, Harris, Eliza, Legree,—in short, each of the *dramatis personæ*, except Ophelia, St. Clair, and Topsy, is coloured with an uniform tint. Those who are wicked have no virtues, those who are good have no vices. This certainly impairs the naturalness which we have mentioned as one of Mrs. Stowe's merits. The absurdity of ascribing perfection to human beings is felt more forcibly as respects Tom and Eva, when we recollect the circumstances of which this perfection is the result. The only associates of Eva, besides her parents, are slaves; a race who, as Mrs. Stowe complains in every page of her book, are, by virtue of their social position, ignorant, degraded, and depraved. From whose example or instruction did she get her glowing piety, her seraphic love, or her angelic purity? from Mammy, or from Rosa, or from Adolph, or from her dreamy infidel father, or from her hateful mother? If the *status* of slavery be so debasing, how did Uncle Tom become a hero and a saint, how was it that the greatest possible excellence, or to speak more correctly, excellence greater than is possible, was produced by the worst possible education?

But though this mono-chromatic colouring, this absence of shade where there is light, and of light where there is

shade—is an artistic defect, we are not sure that it may not have contributed to the popularity of the work. The mass of readers seek only to indulge their sympathy and to gratify their curiosity. They are often rather annoyed than pleased, when faults are attributed to their favourites, or merits to those whom they have determined to hate. They like to divide the inhabitants of the land of fiction, as they generally do those of the land of reality, into good and bad, silly and clever; and are disappointed by the

Fears of the brave, and follies of the wise.

They like to understand what they read. Prospero and Miranda are comprehended at a glance: Hamlet is an enigma not yet satisfactorily solved. And for one reader of 'Hamlet' there are a hundred of 'The Tempest.'

We have said that Miss Ophelia rises above the somewhat monotonous uniformity of Mrs. Stowe's characters; but her peculiarities are rather of manner than of substance. She is a strong-minded, clear-headed, unimpassioned New Englander, with an accurate perception of her duties, and a firm resolution to perform them. The qualities which individualise her are, an exterior preciseness and coldness concealing warm affections; and a sympathy for the slaves as oppressed and degraded, somewhat at variance with her national antipathy to them as negroes.

The great merit, however, of Ophelia is as a contrast to St. Clair. He is drawn with a much bolder outline, and finished with much finer details. The foundation of *her* character is conscientiousness; the foundation of *his* is

benevolence. Her defect is a want of imagination, his is a want of self-control. She endeavours to be useful only to the circle of persons with whom she is in immediate contact; and she succeeds. Her object is a small one, but it is accurately marked out. She knows what she wishes to do, and what are the proper means, and she employs them resolutely, perseveringly, and efficiently. St. Clair's purposes are vast and lofty; they are to affect the fortunes of millions of human beings, through centuries after centuries; but they are vague and undefined. He looks on the existing state of his country with horror, and on his own share in maintaining it with repentance. A half-formed resolution to reform it is never absent from his mind, but his meditations seldom carry him beyond a wish —never beyond a hope. He never advances even so far as to form a definite plan; but drifts on, amiable, intelligent, but useless; doing no harm to his slaves, except by over-indulgence, but doing them little good; and from mere indolent procrastination, leaves them, when he dies, to the chances of sale, and to the miseries of slavery, aggravated by the lax discipline and careless kindness to which he had accustomed them. His levity is characteristic of a mind ill at ease. He is gay because he cannot trust himself to be serious. An attempt at indifference is his only resource against fierce indignation or remorse.

A horrible case of slave-murder occurs:

'It is perfectly outrageous,' says Ophelia to him; 'it will bring down vengeance upon you.'

'My dear cousin,' he answers, 'I didn't do it, and I can't help

it. I would if I could. If low-minded people will act like themselves, what am I to do? They have absolute control—they are irresponsible despots. There would be no use in interfering. There is no law that amounts to anything, practically, for such a case. The best we can do is to shut our eyes and ears, and let it alone. It is the only resource left to us.'

'How can you shut your eyes and ears? How can you let such things alone?'

'My dear child, what do you expect? Here is a whole class, debased, uneducated, indolent, provoking, put, without any terms or conditions, entirely into the hands of such people as the majority of the world are; people who have neither consideration nor self-control, who have not even an enlightened regard for their own interest—for that's the case with the largest half of mankind. Of course, in a community so organised, what can a man of honourable and humane feelings do but shut his eyes all he can, and harden his heart; I can't buy every poor wretch I see. I can't turn knight-errant, and redress every case of wrong in such a city as New Orleans. The most I can do is to try and keep out of the way of it.'

The rest of the conversation, with the exception of some socialist nonsense about capitalists starving their work-people to death, is a fine piece of rhetorical poetry. It is admirable as a history of St. Clair's mind, and still more admirable as a condensed, luminous picture of the system, made still more odious by its apologists, which he has too much virtue to tolerate, and not enough to resist.

St. Clair's scepticism is well conceived. His mind is one of those on which religion is easily impressed. He is sensitive, affectionate, and imaginative. He is educated by a mother whose virtues and talents he inherits, and whose piety he imbibes while he is under her influence. But his religion, founded on feeling, not on reasoning, fades

away when he goes out into the world, and finds the Bible habitually quoted as an authority for systematic cruelty and oppression. His scepticism is not described as arising from his having thought that he had discovered any defect in the evidences of Christianity, for it does not appear that he ever examined them. It does not seem to occur to him—indeed it does not seem to occur to Mrs. Stowe—that faith ought to repose on conviction, and that conviction is an affair not of the heart but of the intellect.

His attempts to combat his doubts by his wishes are well painted.

'Oh,' says Tom to him, 'if mas'r would only look up, where our dear Miss Eva is, up to the dear, Lord Jesus.'

'Ah, Tom, I do look up; but the trouble is, I don't see anything when I do. I wish I could. It seems to be given to children and poor honest fellows like you, to see what we can't.'

'Thou hast hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes,' murmured Tom.

'Tom, I don't believe—I can't believe—I've got the habit of doubting,' said St. Clair: 'I want to believe this Bible, and I can't.'

'Dear mas'r, pray to the good Lord—do, do, dear mas'r, believe.'

'How do you know there's any Christ, Tom? You never saw the Lord.'

'Felt him in my soul, mas'r—feel him now.'

Even Mrs. Stowe does not seem to perceive that she has engaged her hero in a contest in which, as he manages it, success is impossible. Minds unaccustomed to reasoning, habituated to bow to authority, and to take their opinions on trust, may believe because they are told to believe, or because they have always believed, or because those about

them believe, or because it is happiness to believe, or because it is a sin not to believe. But reasoners, men who cannot accept conclusions without premises, however they may wish to be satisfied without proof, cannot be so. And the more earnest their desire, the more certain is their failure. The more they wish to arrive at a given conviction, the more anxious becomes the craving for evidence, the more arduous seem the difficulties that are to be got over, the more obstinate are the lurking doubts. The cure for St. Clair's scepticism would have been an earnest and impartial study of the arguments, and the evidence, for and against Christianity. We say for and *against*, because a man who has once doubted will never be effectually convinced as long as he knows, or even suspects, that there is a side of the question which he has not examined. He who is afraid to do this is not a real believer, though he may think himself one.

The only remaining character on which we need dwell is Topsy. She is, perhaps, the most popular of all Mrs. Stowe's *dramatis personæ*, probably because she is the most original. Nature intended her to be intelligent and affectionate, but she has grown up to girlhood without having ever received instruction or experienced kindness. So far, perhaps, she does not differ much from many of the outcast children that are thrown up from time to time in our police courts. But she is marked by a peculiarity not to be found in Europe, unless it be among the Cagots, if any are left, of the South of France, the feeling that she belongs to a degraded caste. 'There can't nobody love

niggers, and niggers can't do nothing,' is the creed which a life of twelve years in New Orleans has taught her. Though she cannot be loved, however, she can be admired and feared. All the children are delighted by her drollery, grimace, and mimicry; and the elder members of the servants' hall find that whoever casts any indignity upon Topsy, is sure to meet with some inconvenient accident shortly after. Her great pride is in her wickedness.

'Lor, you niggers,' she says to her young admirers, 'does you know you's all sinners? Well you is—everybody is: white folk is sinners too—Miss Feely says so; but I spects niggers is the biggest ones: but Lor ye an't any on you up to me. I's so awfully wicked, there can't nobody do nothing with me. I spects I's the wickedest critter in the world.' And Topsy would cut a somersault and come up brisk and shining, and evidently plume herself on the distinction.'

The way in which this hardened nature, after having resisted the cold kindness of Ophelia, is at once subdued and softened by the compassion and love of Eva, deserves the admiration which it has received.

The last source, that occurs to us, of Uncle Tom's popularity in England is the state of the English and American law as to literary property. Each country refuses copyright to the citizens of the other. The necessary consequence is, that an English work which has acquired celebrity enough to be reprinted in America, reappears there in a form so cheap, that an enormous sale is ensured. More than 100,000 copies of 'Macaulay's History' were sold in America. The English sale was very great, but we

do not believe that it exceeded 30,000. The same is the case with English reprints of American works. 'Uncle Tom' costs probably eight shillings in America, and only one here. The American sale was, as we have seen, 150,000 copies, while the English sale exceeded a million.

Even the 'White Slave,' a disagreeable counterpart of 'Uncle Tom,' in which the hero is in love with his sister, and has his father for a rival, has had twice the sale of the best of Walter Scott's or Miss Austen's novels. It is as long as 'Waverley' and sells for a shilling. A remarkable result of this state of the law in both countries is, that the popular literature of America is English, and the popular literature of England is American. Reprints of American works of fiction, in which the matter of a large volume is compressed into 400 duodecimo pages of small print on bad, thin paper, cover the railway book stalls, and filter from thence into the farmhouses and the back rooms of the village shops. 'Uncle Tom,' 'The Wide Wide World,' 'Queechy,' and 'The White Slave,' form now the staple of the reading of the middle classes.

The 'Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin' is too long. The portion of it which shows that American slavery and the American slave-trade can produce real events similar to those related in 'Uncle Tom,' was scarcely necessary. Such events are, as we have already remarked, the inevitable incidents to the system, nor is the production of a real counterpart for every story in 'Uncle Tom' a complete defence of Mrs. Stowe against the charge of misrepresentation.

With respect to the internal slave trade of America, we do not believe misrepresentation to be possible. Every part of it is so utterly hateful, that its horrors cannot be exaggerated. But with respect to the treatment of slaves by their owners, while employed in their houses or in their fields, we think it possible that 'Uncle Tom' may produce a false impression, not by describing events that do not happen, but by leading us to think that they happen habitually. It is probable, we hope that it is true, that there are twenty Shelbys for one Legree. Evil affects the imagination so much more pungently, and dwells so much more in the memory, than good, that if we run through a list of the railway accidents of a year, we are inclined for an instant to suppose railways the most dangerous means of travelling, instead of being, as they are, the safest. So after reading Mrs. Stowe, we forget the Shelbys, and remember only the Legrees. If Mrs. Stowe be accused, as perhaps she may fairly be, of producing this false impression, she cannot defend herself by proving, as she does triumphantly, that Legrees exist.

The great value of the "Key" consists in the specimens which it gives of the legislation of the Slave States, and of the arguments by which it is defended.

One of the laws common to all the Slave States is the refusal to admit the testimony of a coloured person against a white. Such a law obviously deprives the whole coloured race of the protection, such as it is, which any other laws affect to give to them. The deliberate, intentional killing of a slave is now, by the laws of every State,

murder. But a white may perpetrate it in the presence of hundreds. Hundreds of witnesses may be ready to prove it by direct evidence. They saw him take aim, fire, and the negro fall dead. The Court cannot hear them. Hundreds may be ready to prove it by circumstantial evidence. They heard him threaten to shoot the negro; they saw him load the gun, and go toward the field; they heard the explosion, they saw him return, and they heard him boast that he had shot Pompey. The Court cannot hear them. It can listen only to a white constable, who says that, 'in consequence of something which was told to him,' he went to a certain field, and there found the body of a negro with a wound in the breast: and the evidence of a white surgeon, who opened the body, and found the heart perforated by a bullet.

On such testimony alone, of course, no man can be convicted. A deed done in the face of day, in the presence of crowds, of which every detail is notorious, is to the Court, and to the Court alone, a mysterious event: perhaps a murder, perhaps a quarrel, perhaps a suicide, respecting which every attempt to obtain evidence or explanation has failed.

Mrs. Stowe has quoted the following passage from a speech of a Georgian clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Few, at a conference of the Methodist Church in which it was proposed to admit the testimony of coloured persons against whites in ecclesiastical matters: —

'Look at it! What do you declare to us, in taking this course! Why, simply, as much as to say, 'We cannot sustain you in the

condition which you cannot avoid!' We cannot sustain you in the necessary conditions of slave holding; one of its necessary conditions being the rejection of negro testimony! If it is not sinful to hold slaves, under all circumstances, it is not sinful to hold them on the only condition, and under the only circumstances under which they can be held. The rejection of negro testimony is one of the necessary circumstances under which only slave holding can exist; it is utterly impossible for it to exist without it; therefore, it is not sinful to hold slaves in the condition, and under the circumstances which they are held in the South, inasmuch as they can be held under no other circumstances . . . . If you believe that slave holding is necessarily sinful, come out with the abolitionists and honestly say so. If you believe that slave holding is necessarily sinful, you believe we are necessarily sinners; and, if so, come out and honestly declare it, and let us leave you . . . . We want to know, distinctly, precisely, and honestly, the position which you take. We cannot be tampered with by you any longer. We have had enough of it. We are tired of your sickly sympathies.'*

But, after having thus carefully provided that even the wilful deliberate murder of a negro shall not be punishable unless it can be proved by the evidence of a white, we are inclined to think that the Southern legislators might have safely extended to their slaves the protection which we give to horses, cattle, and dogs. The grounds on which they have thought fit to refuse to do so are well stated in the following judgment of Chief Justice Ruffin, of North Carolina.

The question before him was, whether a person who had hired a slave could be indicted for inflicting on that slave a punishment which was admitted to have been 'cruel, unwarrantable, and disproportioned to the offence.'

* Key, book IV. chap. i.

'The question,' says the Chief Justice, 'has been assimilated at the bar to the other domestic relations; and arguments drawn from the well established principles which confer and restrain the authority of the parent over the child, the tutor over the pupil, the master over the apprentice, have been pressed on us.'

'The Court does not recognise that application: there is no likeness between the cases—they are in opposition to each other; there is an impassable gulf between them. The difference is that which exists between freedom and slavery, and a greater cannot be imagined. In the one, the end in view is the happiness of the youth, born to equal rights with the governor on whom the duty devolves of training the youth to usefulness in a station which he is afterwards to assume among free men. To such an end, and with such an object, moral and intellectual instruction seems the natural means; and for the most part, they are found to suffice. Moderate force is superadded only to make the others effectual. If that fail, it is better to leave the party to his own headstrong passions, and the ultimate correction of the law, than to allow it to be immoderately inflicted by a private person.'

'With slavery it is otherwise. The *end* is the profit of the master, his security, and the public safety: the subject is one doomed in his own person and in his posterity, to live without knowledge, and without the capacity to make anything his own, and to toil that another may reap the fruits. What moral considerations can be addressed to such a being to convince him, which it is impossible but that the most stupid must feel can never be true, that he is thus to labour upon a principle of natural duty, or for the sake of his own personal happiness? Such services can be expected only from one who has no will of his own, who surrenders his will in implicit obedience to that of another. Such obedience is the consequence only of unlimited authority over the body. There is nothing else that can operate to produce the effect. The power of the master must be absolute to render the submission of the slave perfect.'

'I confess the harshness of this proposition. As a principle of moral right every man in his retirement must reprobate it. But,

in the present state of things it must be so: there is no remedy. This discipline belongs to the state of slavery. They cannot be disunited without abrogating the rights of the master, and absolving the slave from his subjection. It constitutes the curse of slavery to both the bond and the free portions of our community. It is inherent in the relations of master and slave. In the abstract it may well be asked *what* powers of the master accord with right. The answer will probably sweep away all of them. But we cannot look at the matter in that light. We are forbidden to enter upon a train of general reasoning on the subject. We cannot allow the rights of the master to be brought into discussion in Courts of Justice. The slave, to remain a slave, must be made sensible that there is no appeal from his master: that the master's power is in no instance usurped, but is conferred by the law of man, at least, if not by the law of God.'

Judgment entered for the defendant.*

We join in Mrs. Stowe's admiration 'of the unflinching calmness, with which a man, evidently of humane, honourable feelings, walks through the most terrible results and conclusions in obedience to legal truth.' Chief Justice Ruffin's exposition of the law of North Carolina is, we have no doubt, accurate. His defence of that law, as necessarily incidental to the status of slavery, is bold and masterly; but it does not convince us. We do not believe that if the 'cruel, unwarrantable, and disproportionate punishment' of the slave were an indictable offence, a master would run much chance of conviction by a Carolina jury forbidden to receive negro evidence. While the laws respecting such evidence remain unaltered, it seems to us unimportant what amount of protection is pretended to be given to the slave, or what amount of restraint is pretended to be imposed on the master.

* Key, book II. chap. ii.

Mrs. Stowe goes on to quote a work by the Rev. James Smylie, an eminent member of the Southern Presbyterian Church, in defence of the laws prohibiting the teaching slaves to read—'Laws,' says Mr. Smylie, 'meeting the approbation of the religious part of the reflecting community.'

These laws, however, we can understand. We are not surprised that slave owners, living among enemies, wish to deprive those enemies of the means of combination afforded by a written language. We are not surprised at their telling the slave that, while he lives, there is no appeal for him against his master; and that even his death under his master's hand is not punishable, unless it can be proved that the master's intention was to kill—not merely to torture. We are not surprised at their attempt, indirectly, to deprive the slave of the legal protection against wilful murder, which shame forces them to pretend to provide for him.

We see why, in every Slave State, the crime of a slave is punished, far more severely than that of a free man. The slave is already in a situation worse than any to which a free man can be reduced by punishment, short of perpetual imprisonment or death. Sufferings and degradations, from which a freeman would escape by suicide, are the ordinary incidents to his status. Habit prevents their having any terrors for him. The only resources left to the law are torture, mutilation, and death.

We can understand the motive for enacting, in North Carolina, the law which justified the following proclamation,

extracted by Mrs. Stowe from the 'Wilmington Journal' of Dec. 13, 1850:—

Whereas complaint has been made before us by Guilford Horn, that his slave Harry hath absented himself from his master's service, and is supposed to be lurking about in this county. We do hereby, by virtue of the Act of Assembly in such cases made and provided, declare that if the said slave Harry doth not return home immediately, any person or persons may kill and destroy the said slave by such means as he or they may think fit, without impeachment of any offence for so doing.

Given under our hands and seals this 29th June, 1850.

J. T. MILLER, J. P.
W. C. BETTENCOURT, J. P.*

We can understand, too, the motive for the supplementary law of that State, which enacts that when a runaway slave has been killed, in obedience to such a proclamation, his value shall be assessed by a jury, and two-thirds of that value paid out of the public treasury to the master—a law which accounts for the following advertisement, published by the aforesaid Guilford Horn:

One hundred and twenty-five dollars will be paid for the delivery of the said Harry to me at Tosnott Depôt, Edgecombe County; *or one hundred and fifty dollars will be given for his head.* He has a free mulatto wife, lately removed to Wilmington, with whom he will likely be lurking. Masters of vessels are cautioned against harbouring him, as the full penalty of the law will be exacted.

Harry's head represented two-thirds of the value which a jury might assess for his whole person. Harry, alive, would probably have again run away to his wife. It was

* Key, p. 200.

worth Mr. Horn's while to offer a bribe of twenty-five dollars additional to Harry's captors, if they would have the kindness to kill him, instead of bringing him to Tosnott Depôt.

All this legislation has an intelligible object, and pursues it by intelligible means. But there are other slave laws which, perhaps from our ignorance of the circumstances which render them necessary, look, to European eyes, like wanton cruelty.

The Americans probably think themselves more civilised than the most barbarous of the inhabitants of Europe, the Russians. The great mitigation of the slavery of Russia is the permission given by the master to his serf to work, to trade, and to acquire property for himself, paying to his master a rent, called an obroc. It is an arrangement eminently useful to both parties and also to the country. There are considerable merchants, bankers, and tradesmen who are slaves, whose services are valuable to the public, and whose obroc forms the greater part of their master's income.

Such contracts under the laws of the Slave States, are not merely void, they are offences—for which the master is fined, the slave punished, and what he calls his property is confiscated.

Thus the law of Mississippi imposes a fine on a master convicted of permitting his slave to cultivate cotton for his own use, or of permitting him to keep stock of any description, or of licensing him to go at large and trade as a freeman. In North Carolina, the offence is committed

by merely allowing the slave to go at large as a freeman, allowing him to trade is not essential. The allowing him to hire himself out for his own benefit is punished in Georgia by a fine on the master of thirty dollars a week. Of course the slave convicted of having been allowed to grow cotton, or convicted of having been allowed to keep stock, or convicted of having been allowed to go at large, or convicted of having been allowed to hire himself out, is punished separately.*

One of the safest modes of extinguishing slavery is gradual emancipation. It was thus that it disappeared in England. It is also the best palliative of existing slavery. It holds out a reward for good conduct, the only permanent reward that can be held out to a slave. It substitutes hope for fear.

In South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, it is an offence. It can indeed be effected, as everything can be effected, by an Act of the Legislature, that is to say, by a law passed for the purpose of emancipating a given slave—but every attempt to do it privately, by the mere will of the master, is punished, as respects the emancipator by a heavy fine, and as respects the slave, by his being sold by auction for the benefit of the State.

The working of the law may be brought practically before the reader by the following case.

A man named Elisha Brazaelle, a planter in Jefferson County, Mississippi, was nursed during a long illness by a young coloured slave girl. Feeling that he owed to her his

* Key, chap. xiii.

life, he rewarded her by taking her to Ohio, a Free State, and educating her there. She grew up an intelligent accomplished woman, and he married her, having previously executed a deed for her emancipation, which was recorded in the States both of Ohio and Mississippi. He had by her a son, named James Monroe Brazaelle, who, from his parentage, must have been nearly white. The family lived for many years in Mississippi, and Elisha Brazaelle died there, having by his will, which recited and confirmed the deed of emancipation, provided for his widow, and devised all the rest of his property to his son.

Some poor and distant relations in North Carolina heard of the death, and filed a bill in the Court of Equity in Mississippi, claiming the property, and, as part of the property, claiming also the widow and son of the testator. The case is reported in Howard's Mississippi Reports, vol. ii. p. 837.

We copy from Mrs. Stowe, an extract from the judgment of the Chief Justice, one Sharkey.

To give validity (says the Judge) to the deed of emancipation would be a violation of the declared policy, and contrary to a positive law, of the State.

The policy of a State is indicated by the general course of legislation on a given subject; and we find that free negroes are deemed offensive, because they are not permitted to emigrate to, or remain in, the State. They are allowed few privileges, and subject to heavy penalties for offences. They are required to leave the State within thirty days after notice, and in the meantime to give security for good behaviour; and those of them who can lawfully remain must register and carry with them their certificates, or they may be committed to jail. It would also violate

a positive law passed by the Legislature, expressly to maintain this settled policy, and to prevent emancipation. No owner can emancipate his slave, but by deed or will properly attested, or acknowledged in Court, and proof to the Legislature that such slave has performed some meritorious act for the benefit of the master, or some distinguished service for the State; and the deed or will can have no validity until ratified by a special Act of the Legislature. It is believed that this law and policy are too essentially important to the interests of our citizens to permit them to be evaded.

The state of the case shows conclusively that the emancipation *had its origin in an offence against morality, pernicious and detestable as an example.*—But above all, it seems to have been planned and executed with a fixed design to evade the rigour of the laws of this State. The acts of the party in going to Ohio with the slave, and there executing the deed, and his immediate return to this State, point, with unerring certainty, to his purpose and object. The laws of this State cannot be thus defrauded of their operation by one of our own citizens. If we could have any doubts about the principle, the case reported in 1 Randoph, 15. would remove them.

As we think the validity of the deed must depend upon the laws of this State, it becomes unnecessary to inquire whether it could have any force by the laws of Ohio. If it were even valid there, it can have no force here. The consequence is, that the negroes, John Monroe Brazaelle and his mother, are still slaves, and a part of the estate of Elisha Brazaelle. They have not acquired a right to their freedom under the will; for, even if the clause in the will were sufficient for that purpose, their emancipation has not been consummated by an Act of the Legislature.

John Monroe Brazaelle, being a slave, cannot take the property as devisee; and I apprehend it is equally clear that it cannot be held in trust for him.—(4 Desans. Rep. 266). Independent of the principles laid down in adjudicated cases, our statute law prohibits slaves from owning certain kinds of property; and it may be inferred that the Legislature supposed they were extending

the Act as far as it could be necessary to exclude them from owning *any* property, as the prohibition includes that kind of property which they would most likely be permitted to own without any interruption, to wit, hogs, horses, cattle, &c. &c. They cannot be prohibited from holding such property, in consequence of its being of a dangerous or offensive character, but because it was deemed impolitic for them to hold property of *any* description. It follows, therefore, that Elisha Brazaelle's heirs are entitled to the property.*

The property being, the estate, the slaves, and among the slaves, the widow and son and devisee of the testator, educated in affluence, freedom, and refinement, and now slaves for ever.

When we look back at this frightful code we feel the force of Mrs. Stowe's remark, that it is not by insulated attempts to better the condition of the slaves on any given plantation, but by repealing the local legislation of the Slave States, that permanent or general improvement is to be effected. While the laws remain unaltered, nothing can be done.

Let us suppose the case of a Georgian, who succeeds, when he comes of age, to a property consisting of 2000 acres of land, with the necessary buildings, and live and dead stock, including in the live stock 500 slaves. Let him be convinced of the wickedness of slaveholding, and of the still greater wickedness of slave trading, and resolve at least to free his own soul from the crime.

The obvious course is to do as George Shelby does in 'Uncle Tom,' to emancipate his slaves, and retain them as free labourers on wages.

* Key, p. 275.

'This is illegal:' in the words of Chief Justice Sharkey, 'it is an offence against morality, pernicious and detestable as an example.' The master who is guilty of emancipating is fined 1,000 dollars. The slave who is convicted of having been emancipated is to be sold by public outcry for the benefit of the State.

If he cannot emancipate his slaves in Georgia, he may take them to a Free State and set them free there. To do so of course is utter ruin, — the land without the slaves is valueless; but he prefers ruin to self-reproach.

But not one of them can read or write — they can do nothing but grow cotton and pick it. Five hundred such helpless beings cast adrift in a Free State, in which a negro is an object of contempt and disgust, would starve. He must attempt to educate and prepare them for freedom, and begins by having them taught to read.

It is illegal; it subjects him to a fine of thirty dollars for each offence, that is to say, for each time that each slave is instructed, and subjects his coloured teachers male and female to imprisonment and thirty-nine lashes.

He submits then to retain them on his estate, but resolves that at least none shall be sold off. He is forced to be a slave holder, but thanks God that he cannot be forced to be a slave trader.

But the laws of population pursue their irresistible course. In a state of society in which the expense of a child falls not on the parents, but on their master, there can be no preventive check. In a plantation in which the negroes are not overworked or underfed, there can be no

physical check. Nothing but the most grinding oppression, or the disproportion between the sexes incident to a country that imports slaves, can prevent a slave population from doubling every twenty-five years. In fact, notwithstanding much oppression, the slave population of the United States does double in a less period than every twenty-five years.

In a few years, therefore, the 500 slaves with whom our planter began have increased to 750 — in a few years more they will be 1,000 — the 2,000 acres cannot employ them: they soon will not be able to feed them.

He attempts to relieve himself by letting those who think that they can shift for themselves go at large. It is illegal — as before, he is fined and the slave is punished.

He thinks that he may be able to turn to account some of the outlying portions of his estate, and to diminish the burden of its excessive population, by letting his slaves cultivate it for their own benefit, and support themselves by keeping stock on it.

It is illegal — he is fined, the slave is punished, and the stock is confiscated and sold for the benefit of the State and of the informer.

By the time he is between sixty and seventy, his slaves have increased from 500 to 1,500. His whole land is devoted to their support and is insufficient.

He must either starve them or sell them.

And these are the laws of a country that calls itself free!

We have said that such oppression is not to be found in Naples, in Turkey, or in Russia. We do not believe that such oppression is to be found in any other part of the world, civilised or uncivilised. We do not believe that such oppression ever existed before. The slavery of Greece as well as that of Rome was atrocious. We have no doubt that it was far more cruel,—using the word 'cruel' to signify the infliction of torture or death,—than that of America. It was characterised by the indifference to human suffering which belongs to Paganism. But its oppression was less degrading, less systematic, less unrelenting. It deprived the slave of liberty, but it left him hope. It gave the master full power to ill-treat his slaves, but it also gave to him full power to benefit them. The slave might be instructed, he might have a sort of property, he might have his freedom.

Et spes libertatis erat, et cura peculi.

Republican America has elaborated a tyranny such as no democracy, no aristocracy, no monarchy, no despotism ever perpetrated, or, as far as we know, ever imagined.

But how is the alteration of these laws to be effected?

With few, we fear very few, exceptions, the minds of all classes in the Slave States seem, on the subject of slavery, to be perverted. The higher classes, the workers and breeders of slaves, are blinded by their interests. The lower classes, the 'poor white trash,' whom the want of education, the want of employment, and the disgrace-

fulness of labour, have degraded below the level of the lowest European proletaires, are ferocious partisans of every law which keeps another class below them. It is some consolation in their misery, that they have a right to trample on the majority of their fellow-citizens. They constitute the ferocious mob which the slave-owners and slave-traders let loose on all who are suspected of being abolitionists.

As for the clergy, the most powerful body in the United States, the body through whose influence slavery was gradually extinguished in Europe, they are utterly corrupted by their subserviency to their employers. Some of them are members of the vigilance committees, who form an Inquisition, differing from that of Rome only in that it persecutes abolitionists instead of heretics, and that its proceedings are illegal, and consequently that it employs mobs for its instruments instead of officials. All of them have prostituted their knowledge, and the respect due to their functions, by indiscriminate defence, not only of slavery, but of the very laws which, as we have seen, while they last, render slavery irremediable.

There is not a Slave State in which an attempt to repeal these laws would not be worse than fruitless, in which it would not expose its proposers, and all who were suspected of approving the proposal, to insults, assaults, and perhaps death. Such a repeal must be imposed from without; there is no tendency towards it within. The slavery of the British colonies was softened, and finally abolished, by the central Government. If it had been left

to the local legislatures, it would have been still existing, probably unmitigated, perhaps exasperated. The United States possess a central authority, which has power to declare all these laws unconstitutional and void; which can repeal them and prohibit their re-enactment; but such enactments could be made binding on all the States only by being introduced as amendments into the Constitution. The Constitution of the United States, as is generally the case with the constitutions of nations which have created them *de novo*, instead of gradually evolving them, can be altered only by a slow and difficult process. Congress cannot make amendments in it without the consent of two-thirds of both houses, and cannot call a convention to make them without the concurrence of the legislatures of two-thirds of the States, and when made they require ratification by three-fourths of the States.

The Free States are now sixteen, the Slave States fifteen. To obtain the requisite majority of three-fourths, six of the Slave States must join the Free States. We do not believe that this is to be hoped for now. If, under the operation of the Nebraska and Kansas Act, two or three more Slave States are added to the Union, it will become obviously impossible.

That Act, however, is not part of the Constitution. Congress, by a simple majority, can repeal it, and arrest the territorial progress of slavery.

It can also repeal the Fugitive Slave Act, and relieve

the Northerns from the hateful liability to become slave hunters for the Southerns.

But it can do no more.

Beyond the repeal of these Acts, what can an American statesman, anxious to free his country from this intolerable load of misery and crime, effect?

Nothing.

He may indulge the hope that the ameliorating influence of knowledge and religion will induce the inhabitants of the Southern States themselves to amend gradually their atrocious slave codes. He may console himself with such a hope. We should be sorry to deprive him of it, but we do not share it. Public opinion in the Slave States, instead of improving, is deteriorating. There are no instruments by which it can be enlightened or shamed. The press, the pulpit, the legislative bodies are silenced. Any man 'tainted,' to use the language of a Southern Presbyterian clergyman, 'with the blood-hound principles of abolition,'* or even suspected of being so tainted, is ruined, outraged, and exiled, if he is allowed to live.†

That Providence will, in its own way and in its own time, work out a cure, we believe; because we believe improvement—progressive, though always slow and often interrupted—to be among the laws by which this earth is governed. But we do not venture to hope that we, or our sons, or our grandsons shall see American slavery extirpated, or even materially mitigated.

* Key, p. 492.

† See Note II.

NOTE I. p. 426.

The following story, which we take from an American paper of July, 1855, illustrates the remarks in the text:—

A Mr. Pardon Davis, of Marquette County, in the State of Wisconsin, was temporarily resident at Tensas, in Louisiana, near which was a plantation, the scene of horrible cruelties. Some negroes escaped from it, took refuge in his wood-yard, were concealed by him, and sent in a canoe across the river. A negro-hunter discovered their trail, hunted them for forty miles, overtook them, and gave them to his dogs to be worried until at last they confessed whence they came and who had assisted them. For this crime Mr. Davis was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment in the State prison of Louisiana, and is now at Baton Rouge undergoing his punishment.

The following passages are extracted from a letter, which he wrote before his trial, to the Baptist community of which he is a member.

'I ask, my brethren and sisters, in the fear of God, if a man should come to you, presenting a lacerated back, exposed to the rays of a southern summer's sun for want of a shirt, feet bleeding from having been torn by snags and briars, hungry and faint, whose crime was that he failed, after straining every nerve, to perform the labour appointed him—I ask, would you—could you—turn him away without assisting him? No, brethren, I think I know you too well—I think you would hand up a loaf of bread, part with some of your surplus clothing, or, if you had no surplus, buy some, as I did—help him across the river, point him to the star of Liberty, and bid him God speed.

'And now what more can I say? Have I done wrong? Have I done more than any *man* ought to do? Dear brethren, I leave you to judge; I am willing to be governed by your decision. I wait with the greatest anxiety to hear from you to know whether I shall receive your sympathies and prayers, or whether I have done wrong and am considered a heathen. If the former, I can bear my affliction with fortitude; but if the latter, I feel that my life hangs upon a slender thread—that my

days are numbered. In the meantime, brethren, pray for me; sisters, remember me in your prayers.

'I must cease, for the last paper in my possession is nearly covered over. And now, my brethren, when you meet to pray for heathen lands, remember, O! remember our own country. Watch over the declining steps of my parents; 'tis the greatest boon I can ask, for I fear that this intelligence will bring the grey hairs of loving father and affectionate mother to the grave. Comfort them with the thought that we may meet in heaven.'

Note II. p. 468.

Even in Virginia, once the most civilised of the States, to speak, though in another State, against slavery is punished by exile.

This crime was committed by a Mr. Underwood, a Virginian, on the 26th of June, 1856. We copy a letter to him from his wife, warning him of what was to come, and also the sentence inflicted on him by a self-constituted tribunal.

'My dear John C., 'June 23, 1856.

'A friend communicated to me yesterday that there existed the greatest excitement and indignation against you for making, as reported in *The Herald*, an anti-slavery speech. ' —— told our friend, they were watching at Piedmont on Saturday for your arrival, and he had no doubt, if you had come that day, you would have met with personal violence. At Markham Station the leaders say they go for giving you notice, and a reasonable time to wind up your business and leave the State. I send this morning to Alexandria to mail this letter at that place, and telegraph to you to remain in New York till you receive it. I know not what to advise. I am afraid the excitement will meet you if you come. You know I am a Jackson, and I could not have Jackson blood in my veins without resisting till the last drop is shed in defence of life and liberty; but I do not believe in courting mob law or martyrdom. I feel greatly troubled at this state of things, and fear if your speech can be obtained it

will exasperate the people here greatly. I hope you will be prudent; remain awhile in New York. Write immediately, and tell me what to do on the farm, and I will try to have your wishes carried out as nearly as I can.

'With sorrow and much love, I remain, as ever,

'Your devoted wife,

'M. G. UNDERWOOD.'

FROM 'THE VIRGINIA SENTINEL,' JUNE 27TH, 1856.

At a large and respectable meeting held at Piedmont Station, on the 26th inst. for the purpose of expressing their sentiments in relation to the course pursued by John C. Underwood, of Clarke County, and George Rye, of Shenandoah, at the Black Republican Convention, recently held at Philadelphia:—

'Resolved, That a committee be appointed to wait upon Mr. Underwood, to inform him of the just feelings of indignation created by his course in the Convention, together with his former (reputed) course in regard to the institution of slavery, and that they deem it just and advisable that he should leave the State as speedily as he can find it in his power to do so.

'Resolved, That the Alexandria *Gazette*, Alexandria *Sentinel*, Virginia papers generally, the *National Intelligencer*, and Baltimore *Sun*, are requested to insert the above as an act of justice to the citizens of our State.'

EDWIN S. ASHBY, Secretary.

ROBERT SINGLETON, Chairman.'

I add the following comments by American writers and speakers on the attempt to assassinate Mr. Sumner in the Hall of the Senate.

FROM THE 'RICHMOND INQUIRER,' JUNE 12, 1856.

In the main, the press of the South applaud the conduct of Mr. Brooks, without condition or limitation. Our approbation, at least, is entire and unreserved. We consider the act good in conception, better in execution, and best of all in consequence.

The vulgar Abolitionists in the Senate are getting above themselves. They have been humoured until they forget their position. They have grown saucy, and dare to be impudent to gentlemen! Now, they are a low, mean, scurvy set, with some little book learning, but as utterly devoid of spirit or honour as a pack of curs. Intrenched behind 'privilege,' they fancy they can slander the South, and insult its representatives with impunity. The truth is, they have been suffered to run too long without collars. They must be lashed into submission. In the absence of an adequate law, Southern gentlemen must protect their own honour and feelings. It is an idle mockery to challenge one of these scullions. It is equally useless to attempt to disgrace them. They are insensible to shame, and can be brought to reason only by an application of cowhide or gutta percha. Let them once understand that for every vile word spoken against the South they will suffer so many stripes, and they will soon learn to behave themselves like decent dogs—they can never be gentlemen. Mr Brooks has initiated this salutary discipline, and he deserves applause for the bold, judicious manner in which he chastised the scamp Sumner. It was a proper act, done at the proper time, and in the proper place.

It is idle to talk of the sanctity of the Senate Chamber, since it is polluted by the presence of such fellows as Wilson, and Sumner, and Wade. They have desecrated it, and cannot now fly to it as to a sanctuary from the lash of vengeance.

We trust other gentlemen will follow the example of Mr. Brooks, that so a curb may be imposed upon the truculence and audacity of Abolition speakers. If need be, let us have a caning or cowhiding every day. If the worst come to the worst, so much the sooner, so much the better.

A Meeting in South Carolina.

A public meeting of the citizens of Fairfield was held on Tuesday night, 27th ult., to approve the conduct of the Hon. Preston S. Brooks.

The object of the meeting being briefly stated by Franklin

Gaillard, James R. Aiken, Esq., offered the following preamble and resolutions, which he handsomely sustained by remarks adapted to the occasion:—

'Whereas the citizens of the slaveholding States have for many years practically submitted to the most aggravated expressions of insolence and abuse from citizens of the Northern States, as disseminated not only from the press but also from the pulpit and the forum; and whereas a tame and quiet submission to such limited conceptions of truth, justice, and equity only tend to degrade the South from her high position and deprive her of those constitutional rights which she has ever maintained at any and every sacrifice—

'Resolved, That we most heartily approve the practical enforcement of respect for the motives of Southern men and Southern States, in the chastisement inflicted upon the champion of black republicanism by the Hon. P. S. Brooks; and that we hereby tender to Mr. Brooks our cordial approbation of his gallantry, and express our indignation at the spirit manifested, not only by Abolition orators and papers, but by the public meetings in Northern cities, which have undertaken to denounce his course on the above occasion.

'That a special delegate be sent to Washington to carry a copy of these proceedings.

'That the Secretary be requested to forward by him a copy to each of our delegates in Congress.'

The 'South Carolina Times' (State Paper), of the 27th ult., holds the following language in relation to the late attack on Mr. Sumner:—

'Up to the 22nd of May, A.D. 1856, none have been found willing to step forward, as Carolinians, in defence of the character of Southern men or the institutions of the South, but the Hon. Preston S. Brooks. Col. Brooks has the honour of being the first man who dared to carry out his declaration that he was ready to commence the war in Washington, in the halls of Congress.

'Colonel Brooks has done nothing that South Carolinians ought to be ashamed of. He has boldly stepped forward, at the risk of

his life, ease, and social relation, in defence of the chivalrous Butler, and we know that there will be found but one sentiment among the people of South Carolina, which is "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."'

The following resolution was passed at a late meeting of the citizens of Newberry (Brooks's district):—

'Be it unanimously resolved, That this meeting approves the conduct of the Hon. P. S. Brooks in the premises, and that it recommends that meetings be held, on the first Monday in June next, in the various districts constituting this Congressional district, to express the approbation which we are sure his constituents generally will accord to him.'

FROM THE 'NEW YORK EVENING POST' OF THE 11TH JUNE 1856.

Extract from a speech by Mr. Richard Dana, junior,* at a Sumner meeting in Cambridge held in June 1856:—

'Charles Sumner has been struck down in a manner which his colleague has for ever branded, and so we declare it to-night, as "brutal, murderous, and cowardly." This is bad, but it is not that which stirs the people of the Free States as one man. He was struck down for words spoken in debate, and in the sanctuary of his office.

'But this is not all. It was done by a member of Congress, and expressly for words spoken in debate. But this is not half. It will not be punished. The man who did the deed will not be expelled, nor will he be punished, adequately, if at all, by the laws of the District of Columbia—a domain ceded to Congress for the very purpose of enabling it to secure freedom of debate and action, by laws of its own. All these may seem bad, wrong, grievous, intolerable. But I have not begun to name the great evil yet. There are ninety representatives from the Slave States. Every one present at the vote, voted against inquiry. There were several senators from the Slave States present at the assault. Blow after blow fell on his defenceless head. No one knew that

* The author of 'Two Years before the Mast.'

the next blow might not be the fatal blow: yet no one interfered; no word, no cry, no motion. Not one press south of the Potomac has condemned the act. Not one public man, or public body, has condemned it. On the contrary, all have adopted and defended it. It is recognised as a policy—as a system—and commendation and honour are heaped upon the perpetrator, so that others may be stimulated to do the like. Already the leading southern journals are pointing out the next victim. A kind of Lynch law is to be instituted wherever the subject of slavery is involved.

'Mr. President, the last census has demonstrated what many have declared, but few have believed, that under the form of a republic, this country is now, and has long been, governed by an oligarchy. In the Free States there are now about seventeen millions of free inhabitants and no slaves. In the Slave States there are four millions of slaves, owned by three hundred and fifty thousand owners. These 350,000 owners of slaves own the valuable land and the labourers, and monopolise the government of the Slave States. The non-slaveholding free population is of little account. This forms the privileged class, the oligarchy. It is not for the purpose of making them odious that I use this name. It is the only proper designation. Including the families of the owners, there may be two millions of persons in the dominant class or order.

'This oligarchy has governed the whole country, and governs it now with a sway of increasing demands and exactions. Of seventeen presidential elections, natives of Slave States have carried thirteen, and natives of Free States four. Of the life of our government, forty-nine years have been passed under slaveholding chief-magistrates, and eighteen under non-slaveholders. They have always had a majority of the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States. The population, the arts, the sciences, commerce, inventions, copyrights, manufactures, all are with the Free States. Yet the Slave States hold and have always held the judiciary. They almost monopolised the army and navy when appointments were open. At this moment, though there are

sixteen Free States and fifteen Slave States, a majority of the Senate are slave holders.

'To make a long story short, there has never been a question between the slave power and the free power, on the floor of Congress, in which the slave power has not triumphed.

'Before parting to-night, let me ask any doubting friend, if there be one here, what provocation more he proposes to wait for? They have added Slave States by a *coup d'état*; will you wait until they have added Cuba or Central America? They have tried to force slavery on Kansas; will you wait until they have succeeded? They have violated one solemn compact; how many more must they violate, before you will assert your right? They have struck down a senator in his place. Some of their presses have designated the next victim; will you wait until he has fallen?'

Mr. Dana was right. Mr. Brooks was not expelled from the Senate. His only punishment was a fine of 300 dollars. This is the value set in Washington on freedom of debate. Any ruffian willing to pay 60*l.* may waylay and disable an opponent.

If Mrs. Stowe wrote for fame only, she would have been satisfied with the success of 'Uncle Tom,' and would not have risked her popularity by another negro-slave story. We believe that we owe 'DRED' to a better motive, and that the highest literary reputation, or even the ovation which greeted Mrs. Stowe on her first visit to England, would all have been frankly risked for the great cause to which she devotes herself. 'Dred,' if it cannot add to the author's fame, is yet another and a striking picture of the evils of negro slavery, with this difference, that, while 'Uncle Tom' represents the horrors suffered

by the slave, 'Dred' delineates the moral degradation, the bad feeling, the state of alarm and of civil conflict, the poverty and misery of the master.

There is not so much story in 'Dred' as in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' but it is more uniformly and intensely painful: here and there the gloom is broken by the irresistible humour of one of the author's pet negro characters, but the momentary gleam only contrasts with the black moral thunder-cloud from which it issues. Interesting characters are only introduced to suffer wrong and persecution; our sympathy is overtaxed throughout; and if there is no one description so painful as Tom's death, yet our feelings are allowed none of the relief of a brighter conclusion.

The most carefully elaborated picture is Nina, the heroine. Mrs. Stowe has been kind enough to assist our criticisms by telling us herself what was the character which she intended to paint. This is the description of Nina by Mr. Clayton, her lover:

'I'll tell you just what it is: Nina Gordon is a flirt and a coquette—a spoiled child if you will. She is not at all the person I ever expected would obtain any power over me. She has no culture, no reading, no habits of reflection; but she has, after all, a certain tone and quality to her, a certain "*timbre*," as the French say of voices, which suits me. There is about her a mixture of energy, individuality, and shrewdness, which makes her, all uninformed as she is, more piquante and attractive than any woman I ever fell in with. She never reads; it is almost impossible to get her to read; but, if you can catch her ear for five minutes, her literary judgments have a peculiar freshness and truth. And so with her judgment on all other subjects, if you

can stop her long enough to give you an opinion. As to heart, I think she has yet a wholly unawakened nature. She has lived only in the world of sensation, and that is so abundant and so buoyant in her that the deeper part still sleeps. It is only two or three times that I have seen a flash of this under-nature look from her eyes, and colour her voice and intonation. And I believe—I'm quite sure—that I am the only person in the world that ever touched it at all. I'm not at all sure that she loves me *now*, but I'm almost equally sure that she will.'

'They say,' said Russel, carelessly, 'that she is generally engaged to two or three at a time.'

'That may be also,' said Clayton, indolently. 'I rather suspect it to be the case now, but it gives me no concern. I've seen all the men by whom she is surrounded, and I know perfectly well there's not one of them that she cares a rush for.'

'Well, but, my dear fellow, how can your extreme fastidious moral notions stand the idea of her practising this system of deception?'

'Why, of course, it isn't a thing to my taste; but then, like the old parson, if I love "the little sinner," what am I to do? I suppose you think it a lover's paradox; yet I assure you, though she deceives, she is not deceitful; though she acts selfishly, she is not selfish. The fact is, the child has grown up *motherless*, and an heiress, among servants. She has, I believe, a sort of an aunt, or some such relative, who nominally represents the head of the family to the eye of the world. But I fancy little madam has had full sway. Then she has been to a fashionable New York boarding-school, and that has developed the talent of shirking lessons, and evading rules, with a taste for side-walk flirtation. These are all the attainments that I ever heard of being got at a fashionable boarding-school, unless it be a hatred of books, and a general dread of literary culture.'

Mrs. Stowe is fond of contrast, and in Nina she has used, until she has almost abused, this powerful instrument. Nina is contrasted with her formal, precise, selfish

aunt; with her calm sober lover; with her brothers — one thoughtful and prudent, and therefore opposed to her intellectually—the other fierce and sensual, and therefore opposed to her morally. Above all, she is contrasted with herself. The union of frivolous and heroic qualities, of careless vanity and unflinching self-devotion, of the fear of trouble and the contempt of death, of fragility of form and strength of will, is so attractive that we cannot wonder if the artist has sometimes been tempted to make her lights too bright and her shadows too dark for reality. The sudden possession of power, the first awakening of love, the feeling of responsibility, and the consciousness of danger, which elevate and strengthen those whom they do not unnerve or depress, may work great and almost sudden changes. They may do so even in our apathetic climate, still more so in the rapid life of the Tropics. But we doubt whether in three months' time they could raise the childish, uneducated, illiterate coquette of the first chapter into the saintly heroine of the thirteenth. We have given the hero's portrait of the heroine; we will now give hers of him, not so much for the purpose of illustrating *his* character as of exhibiting *hers*:—

'He's one of your high-and-mighty people, with such deep-set eyes — eyes that look as if they were in a cave — and such black hair! and his eyes have a desperate sort of sad look, sometimes quite Byronic. He's tall and rather loose-jointed; has beautiful teeth; his mouth, too, is—well, when he smiles, sometimes it really is quite fascinating; and then he's so different from other gentlemen. He's kind, but he don't care how he dresses, and wears the most horrid shoes. And then, he isn't polite; he won't jump,

you know, to pick up your thread or scissors; and sometimes he'll get into a brown study, and let you stand ten minutes before he thinks to give you a chair, and all such provoking things. He isn't a bit of a lady's man. Well, the consequence is, as my lord won't court the girls, the girls all court my lord — that's the way, you know. And they seem to think it's such a feather in their cap to get attention from him, because, you know, he's horrid sensible. So, you see, that just set me out to see what I could do with him. Well, you see, I wouldn't court him, and I plagued him, and laughed at him, and spited him, and got him gloriously wroth; and he said some spiteful things about me, and then I said some more about him, and we had a real up-and-down quarrel; and then I took a penitent turn, you know, and just went gracefully down into the valley of humiliation — as we witches can — and it took wonderfully, brought my lord on his knees before he knew what he was doing. Well, really, I don't know what was the matter just then, but he spoke so earnest and strong that actually he got me to crying—hateful creature!—and I promised all sorts of things, you know, said altogether more than will bear thinking of.'

'And are you corresponding with all these lovers, Miss Nina?'

'Yes; isn't it fun? Their letters, you know, can't speak; if they could, when they come rustling together in the bag, wouldn't there be a muss?'

'Miss Nina, I think you have given your heart to the last one.'

'O, nonsense, Harry! Haven't got any heart! Don't care two pins for any of them! All I want is to have a good time. As to love and all that, I don't believe I could love any of them. I should be tired to death of any of them in six weeks; I never liked anything that long.'

We must of course grant to Mrs. Stowe every hypothesis which she can claim. We must allow her to assume that nature endowed Nina with her choicest gifts, an intrepid heart, an acute intellect, a strong will, and an affectionate and generous disposition, and that the unfavourable

circumstances of her early life did their best or their worst to counteract nature. Still we cannot easily believe that the worst education, that of a Carolina plantation and of a New York boarding-school, would have depraved such admirable materials into a vulgar flirt, or, on the other hand, that a few weeks spent with Clayton and his sister, and a few chapters of the New Testament read with old Tiff, could have raised the vulgar flirt into the glorious being who interposes between the pestilence and its prey, and falls a willing victim in the cause of her people.

It is possible, however, that our criticism may be too severe. It is possible that what to European readers appears the most offensive vulgarity of sentiment and of expression may be a fair representation of an average American young lady. But if Mrs. Stowe is writing for posterity, if she wishes her works, after they have served their immediate purpose of anti-slavery pamphlets, to take a permanent place in English literature, she must devote to the task of adapting these to the taste of the best educated part of the English public far more labour than she has as yet bestowed on them. To make the latter scenes of Nina's life as probable to us as they are charming, she must greatly modify or even expunge the former ones. We venture also to advise her to cut out the greater part of Nina's comments on herself. There are, without doubt, many persons with high qualities, moral as well as intellectual, whose mental eye is always turned inward — whose favourite subjects of observation are themselves. But such persons want the gay joyousness, the delight in the present,

the blindness to the future, the carelessness for improvement, the insensibility of past errors, and the indifference to future ones, which Nina is always proclaiming in her earliest self-exhibitions.

In general, indeed, such demonstrations operate inversely. They lead us to suspect that the paraded qualities are really wanting. We instinctively believe the man who is always talking of his courage to be a coward, and him who boasts his liberality to be a miser. Another objection to this mode of displaying a character is its clumsiness — its want of artistic skill. The highest art, of course, is shown by letting the qualities of every agent be inferred solely from his conduct. No one is described in the 'Iliad.' Inferior poets are forced to explain to us the feelings and the objects of their personages, and set them in motion principally in order to illustrate the previous descriptions. This is the great expedient of Fielding. Allworthy, Sophia, Square, and Thwackum are known to us rather by what is said of them than by what they do. Dramatic poets, who cannot speak in their own persons, substitute soliloquy — a less satisfactory and less real instrument, but still, as we see in 'Hamlet' and in 'Richard III.,' an effectual one. To make them themselves explain, while talking to others, what manner of people they are, is the last and worst resource. We are offended by it as unnatural, and despise it as easy.

Another improvement would be the retarding the pace of the story. Nina's transformation in three months is absurd. Diffused over three years, it would be perhaps

not probable, but possible. And as there is really no plot, as the different scenes are connected only by the identity of the persons who talk, act, and suffer in them, this might be done by merely the change of a few words, by merely substituting years for months.

Among these scenes perhaps the most exquisitely painted is the last. 'Nothing in Nina's life becomes her like the leaving it.' In less skilful hands a death by cholera would have been frightful. Mrs. Stowe, with consummate judgment, has cast a veil over all that is horrible, and exhibits only scenes that are not too painful for sympathy. Nina resembles Niobe — her anguish is not allowed to impair her beauty. At the risk of reproducing to the reader what he knows by heart, we will extract the death scene. Clayton, having been summoned by the news that cholera is in his mistress's plantation, is reposing from the fatigue of a night's travelling: —

A low tap at his door at last aroused him. The door was partly open, and a little hand threw in a half-open spray of monthly rose-buds.

'There's something to remind you that you are yet in the body!' said a voice in the entry. 'If you are rested, I'll let you come down now.'

And Clayton heard the light footsteps tripping dow the stairs. He roused himself, and after some little attention to his toilet, appeared on the veranda.

'Tea has been waiting for some time,' said Nina. 'I thought I'd give you a hint.'

'I was lying very happy, hearing you sing,' said Clayton, 'You may sing me that song again.'

'Was I singing?' said Nina; 'why I didn't know it! I believe

that's my way of thinking sometimes. I'll sing to you again after tea. I like to sing.'

After tea they were sitting again in the veranda, and the whole heavens were one rosy flush of filmy clouds.

'How beautiful!' said Nina. 'It seems to me I've enjoyed these things, this summer, as I never have before. It seemed as if I felt an influence from them going through me, and filling me as the light does those clouds!'

As she stood looking up into the sky, she began singing again the words that Clayton had heard before:—

'I am come from the happy land,
Where sorrow is unknown;
I have parted a joyous band
To make thee mine own.

'Haste, haste, fly with me,
Where love's banquet waits for thee;
Thine all sweet shall be,
Thine, thine, alone.

'The summer has its heavy cloud,
The rose-leaf must fall——'

She stopped her singing suddenly, left the veranda, and went into the house.

'Do you want anything?' said Clayton.

'Nothing,' said she, hurriedly; 'I'll be back in a moment.'

Clayton watched, and saw her go to a closet in which the medicines and cordials were kept, and take something from a glass.

He gave a start of alarm.

'You are not ill, are you?' he said, fearfully, as she returned.

'Oh, no! only a little faint. We have become so prudent, you know, that, if we feel the least beginning of any disagreeable sensation, we take something at once. I have felt this faintness quite often—it isn't much.'

Clayton put his arm around her, and looked at her with a vague yearning of fear and admiration.

'You look so like a spirit,' he said, 'that I must hold you.'

'Do you think I have a pair of hidden wings?' she said, smiling, and looking gaily in his face.

'I am afraid so,' he said. 'Do you feel quite well now?'

'Yes—I believe so—only—perhaps, we had better sit down. I think, perhaps, it is the reaction of so much excitement makes me feel rather tired.'

Clayton seated her on the settee by the door, still keeping his arm anxiously around her. In a few moments she dropped her head wearily on his shoulder.

'*You are ill!*' he said, in tones of alarm.

'No!' she said, 'no! I feel very well, only a little faint and tired. It seems to me it is getting a little cold here, isn't it?' she said, with a slight shiver.

Clayton took her up in his arms without speaking, carried her in, and laid her on the sofa—then rang for Harry and Milly.

'Get a horse instantly,' he said to Harry, as soon as he appeared, 'and go for the doctor.'

'There's no use in sending,' said Nina; 'he is driven to death, and can't come. Besides, there's nothing the matter with me, only I am a little tired and cold. Shut the doors and windows, and cover me up. No, no! don't take me up stairs; I like to lie here. Just put a shawl over me, that's all—I am thirsty—give me some water.'

The fearful and mysterious disease, which was then in the ascendant, has many forms of approach and development. One, and the most deadly, is that which takes place when a person has so long and gradually imbibed the fatal poisons of an infected atmosphere, that the resisting powers of nature have been insidiously and quietly subdued, so that the subject sinks under it, without any violent outward symptom, by a quiet and certain yielding of the vital powers; such as has been likened to the bleeding to death by an internal wound. In this case, before an hour had passed, though none of the violent and distressing symptoms of the disease appeared, it became evident that the seal of death was set on that fair young brow. A messenger had

been despatched, riding with the desperate speed which love and fear can give, but Harry remained in attendance.

'Nothing is the matter with me—nothing is the matter,' she said, 'except fatigue and this change in the weather; if I had only had more over me—and perhaps you had better give me a little brandy or some such thing. This is water, isn't it, that you have been giving me?'

Alas! it was the strongest brandy, but there was no taste, and the hartshorn that they were holding had no smell. And there was no change in the weather; it was only the creeping deadness affecting the whole outer and inner membranes of the system. Yet still her voice remained clear, though her mind occasionally wandered. There is a strange impulse, which sometimes comes in the restlessness and distress of dissolving nature, to sing; and, as she lay with her eyes closed, apparently in a sort of trance, she would sing over and over again the verse of the song which she was singing when the blow of the unseen destroyer first struck her:—

'The summer has its heavy cloud,
The rose-leaf must fall;
But in our land joy wears no shroud—
Never doth it pall.'

At last she opened her eyes, and seeing the agony of all around, the truth seemed to come to her.

'I think I'm called,' she said. 'Oh; I'm so sorry for you all. Don't grieve so. My Father loves me so well, He cannot spare me any longer. He wants me to come to Him—that's all. Don't grieve so. It's *home* I'm *going to—home.* 'Twill be only a little while, and you'll come too, all of you. You are satisfied, are you not, Edward?'

And again she relapsed into a dreamy trance, and sung, in that strange, sweet voice, so low, so weak:—

'In our land joy wears no shroud—
Never doth it pall.'

'She doesn't suffer; thank God, at any rate, for that!' said Clayton, as he knelt over her in anguish.

A beautiful smile passed over her face as she opened her eyes and looked on them all, and said, 'No, my poor friends, I don't suffer, I'm come to the land where they never suffer. I'm only so sorry for you, Edward,' she said to him. 'Do you remember what you said to me once? It has come now—you must bear it like a man. God calls you to some work—don't shrink from it. You are baptised with fire; it all lasts only a little while—it will be over soon, very soon. Edward, take care of my poor people! tell Tom to be kind to them. My poor, faithful, good Harry! Oh! I'm going so fast!'

The voice sunk into a whispering sigh. Life now seemed to have retreated to the citadel of the brain. She lay apparently in her last sleep, when the footstep of the doctor was heard on the veranda. There was a general spring to the door; and Doctor Butler entered, pale, haggard, and worn from constant exertion and loss of rest. He did not say in words that there was no hope, but his first dejected look said it but too plainly. She moved her head a little—like one who is asleep—uneasily upon her pillow, opened her eyes once more, and said, 'Good-bye! I will arise and go to my Father.'

The gentle breath gradually became fainter and fainter. All hope was over! The night walked on with silent and solemn footsteps, and soft showers fell without, murmuring upon the leaves. Within, all was still as death.

Next to Nina the author's favourite character appears to be Tiff. Like Topsy, Tiff could have grown up nowhere but in a Slave State. Indeed, he is still more peculiar than Topsy; for he could have been produced only in the peculiar circumstances of Virginia. His intense aristocratical passions; his contempt for poor whites, and even for rich whites whose riches are recent; his pride as 'a Peyton nigger,' and absence of fellow-feeling with any other negroes, except those bred 'in the grand old

families;' his devotion to his mistress and to her children, and utter indifference to his own comfort, and even to his own life, except as something to be expended for their service; his unreflecting buoyancy of spirits, and his unreasoning faith that all the wants of the Peyton children will be miraculously supplied,—form together a picture strange and grotesque, but yet probable. Nothing of the kind was ever seen in Europe, or ever described there. Yet the reader admits at once that, under the given circumstances, such a being might exist.

Mrs. H. Stowe's theories as to a special Providence seem to be vacillating. Sometimes she appears to disbelieve it:—

> We passed, she says in her 'Sunny Memories,' Kinsale, where the 'Albion' was lost. I well remember, when a child, the newspapers being filled with the dreadful story of the wreck. How for hours, rudderless and helpless, they saw themselves driving with inevitable certainty against these pitiless rocks; and how, in the last struggle, one human being after another was dashed against them in helpless agony.
>
> What an infinite deal of misery results from man's helplessness and nature's inflexibility in this one matter of crossing the ocean! What agonies of prayer there were during all the long hours that this ship was driving straight on to these fatal rocks, all to no purpose! It struck and crushed, just the same. Surely, without the revelation of God in Jesus, who could believe in the Divine goodness? I do not wonder that the old Greeks so often spoke of their Gods as cruel, and believed that the universe was governed by a remorseless and inexorable fate.

The only solution seems to be that physical evil, and, what is much worse than physical evil, moral evil, exist because they cannot be prevented; or, in Bishop Cople-

stone's words, 'That God is not the author of evil, although he is the author of everything else.'* *Why* they cannot be prevented,—*why* it was that the sacrifice of our Saviour was necessary in order to mitigate them,—we cannot discover, and we are not told. Perhaps the impossibility of preventing evil may depend on causes which our faculties are incapable of comprehending. But that there *is* such an impossibility, both reason and revelation, when they teach us that the Deity is benevolent, compel us to believe.

When Mrs. Stowe escapes from reality to fiction and rules a world of her own, we hear no more of the inflexibility of nature. Tiff has fled with his protégés, the Peyton children, from the brutality of their father and step-mother, and lies down with them, without money, food, or shelter, in the outskirts of the Dismal Swamp.

When Fanny and Teddy were both asleep, old Tiff knelt and addressed himself to his prayers; and though he had neither prayer-book, nor cushion, nor formula, his words went right to the mark in the best English he could command for any occasion; and so near as we could collect from the sound of his words, Tiff's prayer ran as follows:—

'O, good Lord, now please do look down on dese yere chil'en. I started them out as you tells me, and now where we is to go, and where we is to get any breakfast, I'm sure I don't know. But oh, good Lord, you has got everything in de world in your hands, and it's mighty easy for you to be helping on us, and I has faith to believe that you will. Oh, blessed Lord Jesus, that was carried off into Egypt for fear of the king Herod, do pray

* Coplestone's Discourses, p. 93.

look down on dese yere poor chil'en, for I'm sure dat ar woman is as bad as Herod any day. Good Lord, you have seen how she has been treating on them, and now do pray open a way for us through de wilderness to de promised land. Everlasting—Amen.'

The last two words Tiff always added to all his prayers from a sort of sense of propriety, feeling as if they rounded off the prayer, and made it, as he would have phrased it, something more like a white prayer. We have only to say to those who question concerning this manner of prayer, that, if they will examine the supplications of patriarchs of ancient times, they will find that, with the exception of the broken English and bad grammar, they were in substance very much like this of Tiff.

The Bible divides men into two classes, those who trust in themselves, and those who trust in God. The one class walk by their own light, trust in their own strength, fight their own battles, and have no confidence otherwise. The other, not neglecting to use the wisdom and strength which God has given them, still trust in His wisdom and His strength to carry out the weakness of theirs. The one class go through life as orphans, the other have a Father. Tiff's prayer had at least this recommendation, that he felt perfectly sure that something was to come of it. Had he not told the Lord all about it? Certainly he had, and of course he would be helped. And this confidence Tiff took, as Jacob did a stone, for his pillow, as he lay down between his children and slept soundly.—ii. 173.

Of course, as every experienced novel-reader foresees, Tiff's prayer is answered. Dred, the phantom-like being from whom the work takes its name, suddenly appears—as he usually does throughout the story when and where he is wanted—carries them to his village of refuge in the recesses of the Swamp, where they are safe till a vessel conveys them to New York, and an old aunt dies to enrich them.

Dred himself has been generally thought a failure, and we are not inclined to disturb the verdict. In some of his rhapsodies he crosses the narrow line which separates the sublime from the ridiculous. In others, he passes the broad one which distinguishes sense from nonsense. What is the meaning of 'the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness'! or of 'the bow is made quite naked according to the oaths of the tribes'! or of this denunciation, which, we are told, 'impressed Clayton strangely'?—

> Every day is full of labour, but the labour goeth back again into the seas; so that travail of all generations hath gone back; till the desire of all nations shall come—and he shall come with burning and with judgment and with great shakings; but the end thereof shall be peace. Wherefore it is written that in the new heavens and the new earth there shall be no more sea.—ii. 307.

What he does is as disappointing as what he says. He receives in his lurking-place in the Dismal Swamp the fugitives whom Mrs. Stowe, having no other means of providing for them, sends to Canada; he starts up opportunely whenever a wanderer is to be guided or a murder to be interrupted. He traverses the forest on foot, or, springing from bough to bough, announces, in the strange language of which we have given specimens, wrath and woe and destruction; and, when he last appears, is seen dying of a wound received in some undescribed combat.

Mrs. Stowe belongs to a clerical family. Her husband is a clergyman, and so, we believe, is her brother. Of

the evils which slaveholding inflicts on slaveholders, none seems to affect her more deeply, to excite more her indignation and her contempt, than the perversion of the religious feelings of the community, of the clergy as well as of the laity, and the wretched sophistry by which the Bible is wrested to support the worst use of the worst institution which the Pagan world has bequeathed to the Christian one. The eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the second volume, entitled 'A Clerical Conference' and 'The Result,' are masterly and far from exaggerated representations of the manner in which interest, timidity, ambition, and party spirit can blunt the perceptions and distort the reason. The scene is laid at the breakfast-table of Dr. Cushing. The *dramatis personæ*, besides Clayton, are Dr. Cushing, Dr. Packthread, Dr. Calker, Father Dickson, and Father Bonnie —all Presbyterian ministers, some belonging to the northern and some to the southern of the two General Assemblies into which that Church is divided. Dr. Cushing is an amiable, intelligent man, whom the desire of sympathy and the fear of giving pain render the accomplice, or at least the tolerator, of crimes which would excite the indignation of the most careless European layman.

Dr. Shubael Packthread, says Mrs. Stowe, was constitutionally a kindly man, with fair abilities, fairly improved. Long habits, however, of theological and ecclesiastical controversy had cultivated his acuteness into such disproportioned activity, that other parts of his intellectual and moral nature had been dwindled and dwarfed beside it. He was a cunning master of all forms of indirection of speech, by which people *appear* to say what they

do not say, and *not* to say what they *do* say. He was an adept in all the mechanism of ecclesiastical debate, of the intricate labyrinths of heresy-hunting, of every scheme by which more simple and less-advised brethren, speaking in ignorant sincerity, may be entrapped and deceived. He was *au fait* in all compromise measures in which two parties unite in one form of words, meaning by them exactly opposite ideas, and call the agreement a union. It is not to be supposed that the Rev. Dr. Packthread, so skilful and adroit as we have represented him, failed in the necessary climax of such skill—that of deceiving himself. Far from it. Truly and honestly Dr. Packthread thought himself one of the hundred forty and four thousand who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, in whose mouth is found no guile. Prudence he considered the chief of Christian graces. He worshipped Christian prudence, and the whole category of accomplishments which we have described he considered as the fruits of it. His prudence, in fact, served him all the purposes that the stock of the tree did to the ancient idolater:—With part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me: for thou art my god. No doubt Dr. Packthread expected to enter heaven by the same judicious management by which he had lived on earth; and thus he went on from year to year, doing deeds which even a political candidate would blush at, violating the most ordinary principles of morality and honour, while he sang hymns, made prayers, administered sacraments: expecting, no doubt, at last to enter heaven by some neat arrangement of words used in two senses.

Dr. Calker, says Mrs. Stowe, was a man of powerful though narrow mind, of great energy and efficiency, and of that capability of abstract devotion which makes the soldier or the statesman. He was earnestly and sincerely devout, as he understood devotion. He began with loving the Church for God's sake, and

ended with loving her better than God; and by the Church he meant the organisation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Her cause in his eyes was God's cause. Her glory, God's glory. Her success, the indispensable condition of the millennium. Her defeat, the defeat of all that was good for the human race. His devotion to her was honest and unselfish. Of course Dr. Calker estimated all interest by their influence on the Presbyterian Church. He weighed every cause in the balance of her sanctuary. What promised extension and power to her, *that* he supported. What threatened defeat or impediment, *that* he was ready to sacrifice. He would at any day sacrifice himself and all his interests to that cause, and he felt equally willing to sacrifice others and their interests. The anti-slavery cause he regarded with a simple eye to this question. It was a disturbing force, weakening the harmony among brethren—threatening disruption and disunion. He regarded it, therefore, with distrust and aversion. He would read no facts on that side of the question; and when the discussions of zealous brethren would bring frightful and appalling statements into the General Assembly, he was too busy in seeking what could be said to ward off their force, to allow them to have much influence on his own mind.

Father Bonnie and Father Dickson are simpler characters. Father Dickson is a self-devoted Christian minister, deeply impressed by the evils of slavery, and ready at any sacrifice to escape from them. Father Bonnie is a Protestant Friar Tuck—large, athletic, sanguine, high-spirited, ignorant, prejudiced, unreflecting, who passes joyously through this life, threatening eternal punishment to all gamblers, drinkers, swearers, and cheaters, or, to use his own words, 'coming down on them with the thunders of Sinai,' but confident that slavery and slavetrading are divine institutions; and that 'if St. Paul

had lived in our times, he would have led about with him a drove of niggers.'

The conference begins by a lamentation by Dr. Calker over the separation of the Presbyterian Church into two General Assemblies, and an earnest wish for reunion:—

'Well,' said Dr. Cushing, 'it's nothing but the radical tone of some of your abolition fanatics that stands in the way. These slavery discussions in General Assembly have been very disagreeable and painful to our people, particularly those of western brethren. They don't understand us—nor the delicacy of our position. They don't know that we need to be let alone in order to effect anything. Now I am for trusting to the softening, meliorating influences of the Gospel. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. I trust that in His mysterious providence the Lord will see fit, in His own good time, to remove this evil of slavery. Meanwhile brethren ought to possess their souls in patience.'

'Brother Cushing,' said Father Dickson, 'it does seem to me that this silent plan does not answer. We are not half as near to emancipation apparently as we were in eighteen hundred and eighteen.'

'Has there ever been any attempt,' said Clayton, 'among the Christians of your denominations to put a stop to this internal slave-trade?'

'Well,' said Dr. Cushing, 'I don't know that there has, any farther than general preaching against injustice.'

'Have you ever made any movement in the church to prevent the separation of families?' said Clayton.

'No, not exactly; we leave that thing to the conscience of individuals. The synods have always enjoined it on professors of religion to treat their servants according to the spirit of the Gospel.'

'Has the church ever endeavoured to influence the legislature to allow general education?' said Clayton.

'No; that subject is fraught with difficulties,' said Dr. Cushing. 'The fact is, if these rabid northern abolitionists would let us

alone, we might perhaps make a movement on some of these subjects; but they excite the minds of our people, and get them into such a state of inflammation that we cannot do anything.'

'Ever since 1835,' said Dr. Packthread, 'these fellows have been pushing and crowding in every Assembly, and we have stood faithfully in our lot, to keep the Assembly from doing anything which could give an offence to our southern brethren. We have always been particular to put them forward in our public services, and to show them every imaginable deference. I think our brethren ought to consider how hard we have worked. We had to be instant in season and out of season, I can tell you. I think I may claim some little merit,' continued the doctor, with a cautious smile spreading over his face. 'If I have any talent, it is a capacity for the judicious use of language. Now, sometimes, brethren will wrangle a whole day, till they all get tired and sick of the subject, and then, just let a man who understands the use of terms step in, and sometimes, by omitting a single word, he will alter the whole face of an affair.

I told the brethren we had better get it on to the ground of the reserved rights of Presbyteries and Synods, and decline interfering. Well, then, that was going very well, but some of the brethren very injudiciously got up a resolution in the Assembly, recommending disciplinary measures for dancing. That was passed without much thought, because, you know, there's no great interest involved in dancing, and of course there's nobody to oppose such a resolution; but then it was very injudicious under the circumstances, for the abolitionists made a handle of it immediately, and wanted to know why we couldn't as well recommend a discipline for slavery, because, you see, dancing isn't a sin *per se*, any more than slavery is, and they haven't done blowing their trumpets over us to this day.

Here the company rose from breakfast, and united in singing the following hymn:—

'Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb;
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?

'Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
Whilst others fight to win the prize,
Or sail thro' bloody seas?

'Sure I must fight, if I would reign:
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the cross, endure the shame,
Supported by thy word.'

Anybody who had seen the fervour with which these brethren now united in singing these stanzas, might have supposed them a company of the primitive martyrs and confessors, who, having drawn the sword and thrown away the scabbard, were now ready for a millennial charge on the devil and all his works.

'For my part,' said Father Bonnie, 'I want union. I'm sure, I'd tar and feather these northern abolitionists if I could get them.'

'*Figuratively*, I suppose?' said Dr. Packthread, with a gentle smile.

'Yes, figuratively and literally too,' said Father Bonnie, laughing. 'Let them come down here and see what they would get. If they will set the country in a blaze, let them be warmed in the fire. I thank the Lord that I am delivered from the bondage of thinking slavery a sin or an evil in any sense. Our abolitionist brethren have done one good thing—they have driven us up to examine the Scriptures, and there we find that slavery is not only permitted, but appointed, enjoined. It is a Divine institution. If a northern abolitionist comes at me now, I shake the Bible at him, and say, 'Nay, but, oh man! who art thou that repliest against God? Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make one lump to honour and another to dishonour?' I tell you brethren, it blazes from every page of the Scriptures. You'll never do anything till you get on that ground. A man's conscience is always hanging on to his skirts; he goes on just like a bear with a trap on his leg—can't make any progress that way. You have got to get your feet on the Rock of Ages, I can tell you, and get the trap off your leg. There's nothing like the study of the Scriptures to clear a fellow's mind.'

During the whole of this century—in fact, ever since the independence of the United States was acknowledged—the two or three hundred thousand slaveholders of the South have governed the millions of the North. They have named the Presidents, they have had a majority in the Senate, and a majority in the Supreme Court, and have wielded the vast patronage of the Executive. In defiance of the Constitution they bought Louisiana; they annexed Texas; they seized a territory larger than Europe, between the Appalachian and the Rocky Mountains; they established slavery on half of that vast continent, on condition that the other half should remain free; they broke that compact, and opened Kansas to slavery; when the people of Kansas refused the pollution, they forced it on them by armed invasion, incendiarism, rapine, and civil war; they riveted on them the chain by the most monstrous code that ever was devised; and as their last triumph they have placed in the chair at Washington a man pledged not only to the maintenance but to the extension of slavery at home, and to war, aggression, and spoliation abroad.

The questions which disturb every mind in America, and to which *we* cannot be indifferent, are, whether this tyranny can last? and, if it is to fall, what is to overthrow it? We have before us a file of American newspapers for the last three months. The fierceness with which the South tramples on its Northern subjects, the indignation and shame with which the North struggles against the oppressor, may be estimated by the violence of the measures proposed

on each side. The expedient of the North is separation. Disunion societies and meetings are multiplying in New York and in New England. We extract a couple of their advertisements:—

☞ NEW YORK STATE DISUNION ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.—A Disunion Anti-Slavery Convention for the State of New York will be held at ALBANY, the second week in February, 1857.

☞ STATE DISUNION CONVENTION.—We, the undersigned, citizens of Worcester, believing the result of the recent Presidential Election to involve four more years of pro-slavery government, and a rapid increase in the hostility between the two sections of the Union;

Believing this hostility to be the offspring, not of party excitement, but of a fundamental difference in education, habits, and laws;

Believing the existing Union to be a failure, as being a hopeless attempt to unite under one government two antagonistic systems of society, which diverge more widely with every year;

And believing it to be the duty of intelligent and conscientious men to meet these facts with wisdom and firmness;

Respectfully invite our fellow-citizens of Massachusetts to meet in Convention at Worcester, on Thursday, January 15, to consider the practicability, probability, and expediency of a separation between the free and slave States, and to take such other measures as the condition of the times may require.

Here is an extract from a speech made at a Boston meeting in July 1856:—

Mr. President, 'in the dark and troubled night that is upon us, I see but one star of hope;' and I thank the Abolitionists of Massachusetts, not only that they first told the secret of slavery twenty-five years ago to the astonished nation, but that they have told another secret, more recently, more daringly, to a nation yet more astonished—told the secret of anti-slavery, and told it in one word—DISUNION! (Enthusiastic applause, long continued.)

Mr. President, as God is in heaven, our destiny and our duty are to be found there. It is our only hope.

And here is the comment on it by another speaker :—

I respond to that sentiment—'Peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must!' (Loud cheers). I think we are unworthy to stand in the old Cradle of Liberty, if we shrink even from the baptism of blood, if such be the will of God; and I am not sure but it is; for if there was ever a time when we might say, 'There is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood,' we have reached that time; and if even by seas of blood we can wash out our sins and stains, we may thank God for that baptism, and accept salvation even on terms so fearful. I think we had better familiarise our minds to the possibility, at least, that the streets of Boston may yet run with blood. I do not believe that ever yet a nation wandered so far from the true spirit of freedom, justice, and humanity, as we have gone, and then returned, without passing through that metaphorical Red Sea; and though I know that war is a curse always, and, probably, always a crime, too, yet I think we have gone beyond the time to question the right of war, for I expect scenes of violence, just as I expect Etna will vomit the blazing bile from her sickening stomach, in obedience to the same law of God which operates upon the human mind as well. And I think, if we escape even with blood and battle—the battle where the 'garments shall be rolled in blood, and accompanied with confusion and noise'—that even then, considering how great a loss we have sustained, salvation will be cheap even at such a price as that (applause).

It is useless (says a less excited arguer) to disguise this state of things, or to pretend that there is any present probability of restoring the harmony that existed in the workings of the Government when there was a common agreement, North and South, that slavery was a nuisance, and an evil to be got rid of at the earliest practicable moment. Such was our condition when the Union was formed and the constitution adopted. At a later period a comparative harmony was preserved by compromises on the

question. Now, the old idea is repudiated by the slavery-men, and the compromise system seemingly adjured by all. We are thus arrived at the point of collision between the opposing forces in the Government. While this state of things continues to exist, there can be no peace. There can be a triumph of one party over the other, but that is all. How long is political union possible under such circumstances? There may be a period or periods of peace between the combatants, but they will ever be temporary, and partake of the character of a truce, or of submission of the vanquished to the victor. Inevitably, however, they must come to an end, and that end is separation of the free and slave States; and it is the part of wise statesmanship, both North and South, among all dispassionate men, to prepare the way for this result in a manner which shall not disgrace the civilization of the age in which we live.

The counsels of the South are at least as desperate. We extract the following passages from a letter addressed by Mr. Phett, an eminent citizen of South Carolina, to the governor of that State, printed in the Charleston 'Mercury' in 1856:—

In my judgment (says Mr. Phett) all true statesmanship in the South consists in forming combinations and shaping events so as to bring about, as steadily as possible, a dissolution of the present Union and a Southern confederacy. Why should we not dissolve our political connection with the people of the North? Have we not in vain done our duty to them, in all patience and humility? Are there any remembrances of the past which they have not embittered, or feelings of affection which they have not outraged? Have they not, for a long course of years, put upon us indignities and wrongs which they never would have borne from us or from any other people? Their conduct towards us, if we were independent nations, would long since have justified us in declaring war against them. Instead of that friendship which a common Confederacy implies, they have for twenty years

pursued towards us a course of the most ruthless hostility. Men are now upheld as their exponents and leaders, governors of States and members of Congress, who openly declare their purpose to destroy us, and exult in the prospect of the slaughter and desolation they meditate carrying over the South. Do we need their association with us for internal protection? We are fully competent to protect ourselves; and if we were not, and turn to them for assistance, we know that they would rather fire the torch of insurrection than extinguish it. Are we not sufficiently powerful to protect ourselves from foreign nations? We are the most important people in the world to its welfare and happiness. If, by a sudden stroke of the Almighty, the Southern States were annihilated, it would occasion a greater shock to the civilisation and comfort of other nations than the extinction of any other people inhabiting its surface. What, then, have we to fear from foreign States? By our productions we can command their friendship and peace, whilst by our physical power we can defy their hostility. Eight millions of the white race, raised to the use of arms, and constituting one of the most military people in the world, inhabiting a country intersected all over by railroads, are unconquerable by any power upon earth. Why, then, should we not be independent in government as we are in all our resources for national power, wealth, and prosperity? Why should we still continue vexed tributaries to the North — harassed dependencies—despised underlings—to be eternally scourged from tariff to slavery, and from slavery to tariff—only, at last, to be trampled out of existence in blood? Break from the North, and give us a Southern Confederacy, as you value honour, prosperity, life itself. Those who have been watching, and waiting, and striving, for Southern independence and a Southern Union — although at times their hearts may have died away within them in despair— have heard the late tumult at the North, mustering the power against the South, with rekindled hope and loftier resolutions. On! let the contest come. If true to ourselves, a glorious destiny awaits us, and the South will yet be a great, free, and independent people.

'We declare,' says the editor of the paper in which Mr. Phett's letter appears—

that we do not only desire to make territories, now free, slave territories, and to acquire new territory into which to extend slavery—such as Cuba, north-eastern Mexico, &c.—but we would re-open the African slave-trade, that every white man might have a chance to make himself owner of one or more negroes, and go with them and his household gods wherever opportunity beckoned to enterprise.

But the North would never consent to this; they would dissolve the Union rather than grant it, say the croaking impracticables. Try it. There is nothing to lose by the experiment. At all events, if the attempt to re-open this trade should fail, it would give one more proof of how injurious our connection with the North has become to us, and would indicate one more signal advantage which a Southern Confederacy would have over the present heterogeneous association called the Union.

These, however, may be the rash ebullitions of the party spirit of irresponsible individuals. We now make some extracts from a grave State paper, the message addressed by Mr. Adams, the governor of South Carolina, to his legislature in 1856.

The object, says Governor Adams, for which you were convened in extra session has been determined. The popular voice has declared in favour of our party. But considered in reference to the vital issue between the North and the South, I fear that it will be a barren triumph—that it will prove to be, at best, but a brief respite of feverish, exhausting excitement, destined to end in embittered feeling and distracted counsel among ourselves. Slavery and Free-Soilism can never be reconciled. Our enemies have been defeated—not vanquished. A majority of the free States have declared against the South, upon a purely sectional issue, and in the remainder of them formidable minorities

fiercely contended for victory under the same banner. The triumph of this geographical party must dissolve the Confederacy, unless we are prepared to sink down into a state of acknowledged inferiority. We will act wisely to employ the interval of repose afforded by the late election in earnest preparation for the inevitable conflict. The Southern States have never demanded more than equality and security. They cannot submit to less, and remain in the Union without dishonour and ultimate ruin.

The consumption of cotton has steadily increased, and will in a few years exceed the supply — not from want, on our part, of land on which to grow it, but from want of operators to cultivate it. The demand for the article being greater than the supply, the price must go up, in the absence of all disturbing causes. As long as this continues to be the case we must prosper; but the certain effect of high prices will be to stimulate the growth of it in foreign countries, and in time to destroy the monopoly which we have so long enjoyed. To maintain our present position we must have cheap labour. This can be obtained in but one way — BY RE-OPENING THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE. It is a diseased sentimentality which starts back at the idea of legalising the slave-trade, and at the same time contemplates without emotion the cruel servitude which capital exacts of labour all the world over. There was a time when canting philanthropists had instilled into us a belief that slavery was wrong. Investigation has entirely changed the once common sentiment on this point. The South now believes that a mysterious Providence has brought the two races together on this continent for wise purposes, and that the existing relation has been mutually beneficial. Southern slavery has elevated the African to a degree of civilisation which the black race has never attained in any other age or country. We see it now in its true light, and regard it as the most safe and stable basis for free institutions in the world. Had the slave-trade never been closed, the equilibrium between the North and the South would not have been destroyed. The North has had the Old World from which to draw her supply of labour, and hence the rapid settlement of the North-West. Since 1808 the South has supplied her own labour, and has necessarily made

slower progress in settling up the South-West. If the trade were open now, I am persuaded that the South would not consent to close it; and this is, perhaps, the best answer to the argument derived from the mere sentiment that is arrayed against the proposition. It is apprehended that the opening of this trade will lessen the value of slaves, and ultimately destroy the institution. It is a sufficient answer to point to the fact that unrestricted immigration has not diminished the value of labour in the north-western section of the Confederacy. The cry there, is want of labour, notwithstanding capital has the pauperism of the Old World to press into its grinding service. I belive that more slaves are necessary to a continuance of our monopoly in plantation products. I believe that they are necessary to the full developement of our whole round of agricultural and mechanical resources; that they are necessary to the restoration of the South to an equality of power in the General Government, perhaps to the very integrity of slave society, disturbed as it has been by causes which have induced an undue proportion of the ruling race. To us have been committed the fortunes of this peculiar form of society resulting from the union of unequal races. It has vindicated its claim to the approbation of an enlightened humanity. It has civilised and Christianised the African. It has exalted the white race itself to higher hopes and purposes, and it is perhaps of the most sacred obligation that we should give it the means of expansion, and that we should press it forward to a perpetuity of progress.

We own our inability to prophesy, or even to conjecture, what ten years hence, or even five years hence, will be the condition of the States and territories now constituting the Union. The forces that keep them together are enormous. There is national vanity, the pride of forming an empire already a match for any existing Power, soon to become superior to any single rival, and likely within the lives of our younger readers to dictate to the whole world, civilised

and uncivilised. In fifty years the Union, if it shall subsist, will contain one hundred millions of the richest and the most energetic population that has ever formed one body politic. It seems at first sight impossible that any arguments or any combination of arguments should induce men to reject such a destiny. But nations are governed less by reason than by passion, and on the side of disunion are arrayed the strongest passions of human nature — resentment, hatred, fear, the recollection of past injuries, treacheries, and insults, and the anticipation of future ones; a belief on the part of the South that the North is resolved to destroy an institution on the permanence of which the fortune and even the life of every planter depends; a belief on the part of the North that that institution is a national sin, endangering in another world the prospects of all its abettors, and in this world distorting the policy, injuring the prosperity, and disgracing the character of the nation.

Between such feelings and such opinions what room is there for compromise? The North is resolved to repress, to circumscribe, and eventually to abolish slavery. The South is resolved not only to perpetuate but to extend it. The fraud and violence of the South have as yet been successful. Can she continue to be so? To a bystander this seems to be impossible. That the weaker, the poorer, the less intelligent minority should in a bad cause prevail against the sympathy and the reason of the whole civilized world, is opposed to all our experience. The South must, we think, be in time defeated. Will she acquiesce in that

defeat? Even supposing her to acquiesce — that is to say, supposing her not to immediately break off from the Union — can she join with the North in working it? Can a people, thus inflamed and divided, unite once in every four years in the election of a ruler with more power and patronage than any czar or emperor? — of a ruler who immediately on his accession has ninety thousand paid places to scatter over a country in which money is almost the only social distinction? — of a ruler who for four years is to be the irremoveable master of the home and the foreign policy of the whole empire; who can wield the disciplined force of the national army and navy, and let slip the ruffians and pirates of private war, against every independent country which his party may covet, and against every home province which it may wish to plunder or to oppress?

Every election approaches nearer and nearer to a civil war. Before every election the threats of the party that fears disappointment are louder and louder. Will they ever be executed? If Colonel Fremont had succeeded last December, as but for the intervention of a third candidate he must have done, would the South have submitted in impotent rage? If, as probably will be the case, he should succeed four years hence, will she then submit?

We will not venture to answer any of these questions. But it does appear to us that a bond which every four years is on the point of separating, must eventually snap.

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